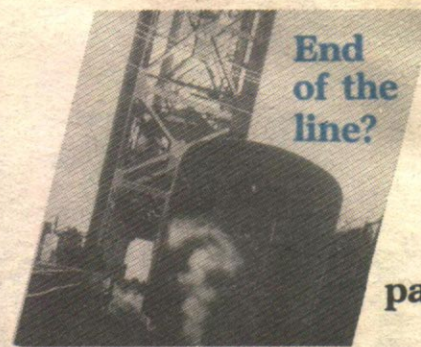


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APRIL 14-20, 1982

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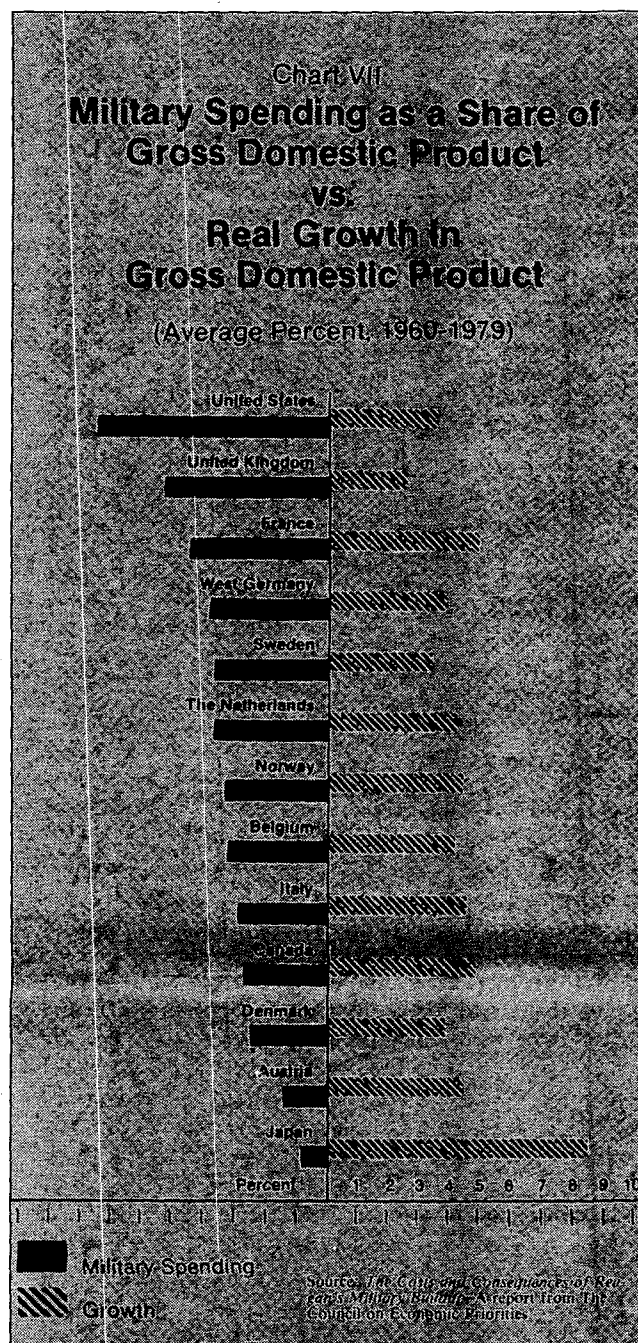
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THE INSIDE STORY



Facing up to the defense question

By David Moberg

Ultimately the question about military spending that must be faced is simply, do we need it? Does spending more do any good? That, of course, depends on the "good" that one intends to pursue—"national security," "protection of American interests overseas" (keeping the world safe for American business), "world peace."

However, with the rate Reagan plans to accelerate military spending—a total of \$1.6 trillion over the next five years, representing an increase of 52.8 percent—more voices, even from the conservative business lobbying groups and from normally pro-military labor unions, are worrying about the economic consequences as well. Since almost any of the potential aims of military policy—whether defense, empire or peace—requires a sound and healthy domestic economy, the concerns are doubly justified.

It is obvious that if a large part of a country's labor, capital and resources go for military needs, production of civilian goods and services is deprived of that potential effort. But in a capitalist system, numerous leftists have maintained, the potential might not be realized if there is no opportunity to make sufficient profits. Furthermore, they agree, defense spending has helped sustain the long wave of growth after World War II as the U.S. came to rely on a permanent war economy.

In 1949, authors of the important National Security

This issue (Vol. 6, No. 20) published April 14, 1982, for newsstand sales April 14-20, 1982.

Council memorandum, NSC-68, argued against conservative fears that expanded government spending, even on the military, would harm the economy. Instead, they said, military expansion could both feed from economic growth and act as a stimulus.

That argument has come under repeated attack in recent years. The latest volley comes from the Council on Economic Priorities in a report prepared for the Machinists union and the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy called "The Costs and Consequences of Reagan's Military Buildup" (\$2.50 from CEP, 84 Fifth Avenue, New York 10011).

Military damage.

The study, prepared by Robert DeGrasse Jr. with Paul Murphy and William Ragen, concludes that the Reagan buildup will be especially damaging to the economy because it concentrates on high technology weaponry. (Arms procurement authorization would rise by 90 percent from 1980 to 1983 compared to a 60 percent rise in the Vietnam war.)

"Jobs, investment and economic growth will be sacrificed," the report states. "Technological progress will be distorted.... The high technology sector, an industry important to future American economic growth, will be hardest hit."

Comparing 13 major capitalist countries over the period of 1960 to 1979, DeGrasse concluded that the U.S. suffered from less rapid growth, slower increases in productivity and higher unemployment in part because it devoted more of its Gross National Product to the military. (See chart.)

The inverse relationship between military spending and growth is statistically significant. But it is not a perfectly linear association without exceptions, they acknowledge, since many factors affect growth, productivity and other economic indices.

Yet DeGrasse found that countries with higher levels of military spending tended to have less capital investment, which in turn could account for lower growth in output per worker hour in manufacturing.

Other researchers—from Wall Street to academia—have recently reported similar correlations, but what is equally interesting is that DeGrasse found *no* statistically significant correlation between either wages or civilian government spending and economic growth. Although Japan has low civilian government spending and high growth, most Western European countries have had both higher growth and higher civilian government spending than the U.S. Some European countries, such as Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, have also had higher manufacturing wages than the U.S. as well as higher growth rates.

Although defenders of military spending cite the economic benefits of spin-offs from defense to civilian production, DeGrasse argues that distortions of defense-oriented planning contribute to the U.S. failure to take advantage of commercial opportunities with new technology. Besides, 60 percent of all federal research and development money (and 30 percent of the total public and private R&D) goes to the military, shortchanging civilian research—a damaging trend that will accelerate with Reagan.

Federal spending on military production at the expense of other programs narrows the focus of U.S. manufacturing, which abandons subway cars in favor of missiles. It yields fewer jobs, because the money goes primarily to higher-paying craft or engineering jobs. Those, in turn, are siphoned from civilian work, depriving those industries and creating inflationary

bottlenecks.

In a study for the Joint Economic Committee, staff expert Richard Kaufman concluded that the Reagan budget underestimated the planned increase by \$80 billion by not taking into account the already troublesome shortages and delays.

The less-skilled and most needy—blacks and women, for example—or those with skills not related to military production—such as teaching—suffer from such allocation. Likewise, parts of the South and Southwest boom while the already hard-pressed industrial belt of the Northeast and Midwest are further deprived.

Cause or consequence?

However, economist Paul Sweezy, co-author of *Monopoly Capital* and co-editor of *Monthly Review*, argues that statistical correlations such as DeGrasse compiled do not establish cause and effect. In fact, Sweezy says, "the military is not the cause of all our bad troubles [economically]. It's more likely a response to the bad troubles."

"In the Soviet Union, it's obvious that the military takes a larger part of available resources and squeezes the civilian economy so you even have starvation in parts of the countryside," Sweezy says. "But in a capitalist economy the effects of dismantling the military sector would be to put us in a 1930s depression. It depends on whether, in the absence of the military, something else would come along to take up the slack."

Without military spending, it's not clear that a federal budget devoted to income redistribution, construction of infrastructure, education, energy conservation and the like would replace military spending, he says, and even an improved budget would not control the use of private capital.

But DeGrasse argues—despite recent comments by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger about how a \$10 billion cut in military spending would cost 350,000 jobs—that ideology of anti-communism (to which one might add protection of the world as a preserve for American and allied business interests) drives military spending upwards, not economic necessity. The military bill is paid with higher interest rates resulting from deficit spending and "crowding out" of civilian borrowers, with inflation from government printing money to cover debt or with reduction in consumption through taxes.

Cutting consumption would lessen the possibilities of pulling out of the recession. Higher interest rates are squeezing small businesses, which are the most innovative and generate more jobs. Unlike the '50s, the U.S. can't afford the military and satisfy other needs, he says, partly because accumulated costs from deferring important social investments are now so high, partly because the world economy is so much more competitive.

Simply cutting back the military dramatically without putting something more beneficial in its place could be disastrous, especially in the short run, but sustaining the military takes its toll in the long run. Replacing the military spending with government policies and expenditures that rebuild the weak links of the system and addressed crucial social needs would carry widespread economic benefits. The central problem is—as it has been for decades—political: to be effective such an approach would mean that the U.S. would have to abandon its role as self-appointed cop of the world and that the government would increase competition with and control over private investment. There are, needless to say, some powerful opponents to that alternative. ■

IN THESE TIMES

The Independent Socialist Newspaper

Published 42 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June, July and August by The Institute for Policy Studies, Inc., 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60622, (312) 489-4444. Institute for Policy Studies National Offices, 1901 Q Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.

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IN THESE TIMES

Was Dellums' news unfit to print?

By Eric R. Alterman

WASHINGTON

ON MARCH 16, REP. RONALD V. Dellums (D-Calif.) began conducting the first extensive congressional hearings on American defense policies since the Fulbright hearings on the Vietnam war. The Armed Services Committee on which Dellums serves refused to sponsor the hearings, so he was forced to seek outside funding for his ad hoc committee on the defense budget.

The hearings, held March 16-18 and March 30-April 1, received little press coverage despite the appearance of William Fulbright, former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as the first witness. According to a Dellums aide, Fulbright's presence was intended to convey continuity between the current hearings and those of Vietnam days.

Many of the witnesses called before the committee strongly opposed the administration's defense policies and were generally outside the hawkish consensus of the Congress. Their orientation, coupled with previous press branding of Dellums as a "maverick" or "radical," led Dellums' staff to speculate that the media's decision not to cover the hearings was a political, rather than a news, decision.

During his testimony, Fulbright discussed the general implications of the budget, providing a perspective for the witnesses who followed. Fulbright told the committee that the administration's proposed defense build-up of \$1.6 trillion over the next five years "is so beyond our capacity to comprehend that it leaves us stunned and paralyzes our ability to protest." He then expressed fear that "this military budget is so large and the emphasis on nuclear weapons so strong and the rhetoric about the Soviet threat so extreme that one cannot resist the feeling that we are preparing to fight and win a nuclear war."

Fulbright called Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's contention that military expenditures are a good social program "simply nonsense." At the close of his testimony he said he agreed with George Kennan, former ambassador to the Soviet Union, that "if we insist on viewing the Soviets as total and incorrigible enemies, that is the way we shall have them—for that view allows for nothing else."

The next witness, Walter LaFeber, a professor of American diplomatic history at Cornell whose four editions of *Ameri-*



According to one of Rep. Ronald Dellums' (right) aides, William Fulbright's (left) presence at the March 16 congressional hearing on American defense policies was intended to convey continuity between the current hearings and those of Vietnam days.

ca, *Russia and the Cold War* have become the standard revisionist text, told the committee that Reagan's Central American policies were "the diplomatic counterpart of throwing gasoline on a gasoline fire." LaFeber accused the administration of "driving Central American revolutions increasingly to the left," saying "if the militarization of U.S. foreign policy in the Caribbean-Central American region has only undermined the long-term interests of this country—even when we had undoubted military superiority in the area—it is not reasonable to believe that by devoting billions more to such militarization the foreign policy will be improved."

Former chief SALT negotiator Paul Warnke also had few kind words for the Reagan military budget, telling the committee that nuclear weapons "are good for one thing and only one thing and that is to prevent others from using

nuclear weapons against us or our friends and allies." In response to the budget proposals, he said, "It is important for economic reasons and, even more urgently, important for our national security that any elements designed to develop a nuclear war fighting capability be eliminated." He then characterized the administration's assertion that "we must possess the ability to wage nuclear war rationally" as "going from MAD to worse." The strategic expert closed out the week's testimony by calling nuclear arms control "an essential component of our national security."

In addition to appearances by Fulbright, LaFeber and Warnke, the first week's testimony included statements by experts such as Herbert Scoville of the Arms Control Association, Richard Barnett of the Institute for Policy Studies, Jeremy Stone of the Federation of American Scientists and scholars such as

Frank Holzman, Earl Ravenal, Robert Aldridge, Norman Birnbaum, Frank von Hippel and Barbara Levi. On the final day of the first week of the hearings, Dellums expressed many of the views presented in the testimony in a speech before the National Negro Press Association broadcast by National Public Radio.

When the hearings resumed March 31, they centered on the economic, moral and civil implications of the Reagan budget and on the impact of global arms sales on third world economies. Testimony by defense experts, labor leaders and clergy included Seymour Melman of Columbia and William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. Jonah House and Philip Berrigan closed out the hearings.

Dellums said his hearings were intended to "challenge the policy assumptions and spending priorities of the current administration and to develop testimony that will serve as a basis for constructing a comprehensive alternative military budget that addresses the true needs of a national security in a responsible manner." As one of Reagan's most virulent critics, Dellums has often been angered by the president's contention that nobody has come up with an alternative to the administration's budget proposal. Dellums plans to have an alternative budget ready after all of the congressional budget hearings are completed.

There is a major difference in scope between the Dellums hearings and those being conducted by official congressional committees dealing with the budgetary process. Dellums' ad hoc committee is attempting what one aide called "the first sustained attempt to challenge the priorities and assumptions of the Pentagon." Until now, the Weinberger policy has been to give the military carte blanche with regard to arms procurement. All that will change if Dellums has any say in the matter. But at this time that appears unlikely since the Dellums hearings were virtually ignored by the media.

Eric R. Alterman is a New York-based freelance journalist.

This amendment may actually pass

By Mary Ellen Leary

SAN FRANCISCO

LOST IN THE CLAMOR OVER cuts, military spending and the "New Federalism," the real centerpiece of President Reagan's plans for reshaping the federal government is quietly moving toward reality. The Reagan-supported campaign for a constitutional amendment to cap federal spending and taxing is now just three states short of the required two-thirds majority. Its progress through state legislatures has largely been eclipsed by the more controversial fate of another proposed constitutional change, the Equal Rights Amendment.

But many observers agree that passage of the "Balanced Budget-Tax Limitation

Constitutional Amendment" appears more likely than that of the ERA. The proposed amendment would end deficit financing of the federal government and place a lid on the rate by which federal spending grows—it could never outrun the pace of national income. As the cornerstones of "Reaganomics," these two restrictions would impose monumental changes in how Washington works.

Some observers believe that a year of worsening recession and the largest deficit budget ever—a deficit nearing \$1 trillion—is an odd time to press for an irrevocable cap on resources available to Washington. But advocates of the amendment, including the president, see advantages to their cause in the current fiscal crisis.

For Reagan, this campaign started nearly 10 years ago, when, as governor

of California, he personally sponsored an initiative at a special 1973 election that proposed fixing a limit to California's year-to-year state spending increases and freezing expenditures in the budget to a fixed portion of all of California's personal income. The aim was to keep government from further encroaching on the public's purse. Though California voters rejected the initiative, it was the harbinger of the 1978 Proposition 13 tax rebellion. And this, in turn, triggered parallel tax reduction moves or restraints on government spending in many other states.

Today, the same conservative economists and monetarists who fashioned that unsuccessful 1973 plan for California—led largely by Milton Friedman—have masterminded a pincer move guaranteed to focus national attention on the drive to impose this type of formula on Washington as well.

One arm of the pincers approaches this fiscal change through a succession of state legislative resolutions calling for a national constitutional convention. Its purpose would be to bar future federal deficit spending and to put a limit on revenues the government can collect

Continued on page 6

SHORT

It won't pay to sue

Say you're an American citizen, and you want to sue the government. Your gripe is with a violation of an anti-pollution law, or a desegregation law, or a freedom-of-information law. A legal victory won't bring you a big cash settlement. But it will bring reimbursement for your attorney, at the going rate, out of the government's pocket—that's the law. Then along comes the Reagan administration, momentarily distracted from its getting of the Legal Services Corporation. This policy just won't do, the administration says. If we *must* pay back private lawyers who successfully sue us, let's cut their fees by 70 percent and force their Constitution-happy clients to chip in a "reasonable" portion of the overhead costs.

That's how it'll be in fiscal 1983, reports Jane Stone of Public Citizen's Congress Watch, if Washington's budget-makers get their way. The administration sees the reimbursement policy as a form of subsidy for left causes. Others see it simply as a way to give poor people access to the courts. Washington attorney Joseph L. Rauh takes a dim view of the Reagan bunch: "They don't want to enforce civil rights laws, they don't want anyone else to enforce them and they try to get the courts not to enforce them." John Shattuck, Washington lobbyist with the American Civil Liberties Union, says the proposed changes "could cut the legs off private enforcement." As for public-interest law firms, which take on lots of these cases, they're caught in a Catch-22: Because of their tax-exempt status, they can't accept payment from clients—while the new rules would *require* clients to pay them something.

Footnote: The Equal Access to Justice Act, which picks up the legal tab for small businesses as they fend off nettlesome workplace safety standards, won't be touched by the 1983 budget ax.

Where no news is bad news

The editor of a newspaper chain in a Detroit suburb says he resigned after his publisher ordered him to downplay bad economic news. In a four-page memo obtained by the Detroit *Free Press*, John Cusumano, editorial director of The News-Herald Newspapers, gets the message from his boss, publisher John Tarrant. "From now on," Tarrant writes, "plant closings, business failures and layoffs will not appear on the front page of any of our newspapers." The publisher adds: "It will be our policy to aggressively support, promote and report business organizations within our circulation area and/or those business organizations who support us with their advertising." Here it gets pretty emotional: "We owe the people of this downriver community our joy when they laugh, our tears when they cry and our sympathy when they grieve. Instead we give them the icy stare of uncaring objectivity."

Taking stock of the world

It's that time again. All around the country, companies are holding their annual shareholder meetings. And for the third year in a row, according to the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities (CEP), nuclear issues at home and the practices of multinational corporations abroad are dominating the voting. A decade ago, only a handful of shareholder resolutions were concerned with social issues; now as many as a quarter of them are. The CEP studied more than 150 social-issue resolutions that were submitted to 97 companies and discovered that all but 66 dealt with two issues—the practices of U.S. multinationals in South Africa and developing countries, and corporate participation in the nuclear power and nuclear weapons industries.

Among the resolution topics, which range from mining operations in Chile to minority hiring practices in the U.S.: Twenty-six resolutions, filed through the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, ask corporations to counter South Africa's apartheid policy. Five ask companies to follow World Health Organization guidelines for the marketing of infant formula. This year, companies face more than 50 resolutions opposing the nuclear industry; in 1979 there were only six. Three resolutions ask companies to reassess or abandon their involvement with nuclear weapons production; two question the MX missile program; and another two ask employers to compensate victims of nuclear radiation. As you might expect, several of the other resolutions are recession-related.

Freeze breezes in California

The organizers of a nuclear weapons freeze proposal in California, reports PNS Radio, say they have already collected almost twice as many signatures as they need to put that measure on the November ballot. Californians for a Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze call public reaction to their drive "fantastic." They've collected 600,000 signatures—although it takes only 350,000 valid names to get on the ballot. Speaking for the signature-collectors, Pam Benda says the Reagan administration's "freeze" plan—bomb now, freeze later—"pays lip service to a freeze while pushing the arms race to greater heights."

—Josh Kornbluth



"How would you feel," countered union official Arnold Mayer, "if we asked that our organizing campaigns be paid for by the government?"

Taxpayers foot the bill as hospitals bust unions

WASHINGTON — Medicare officials recently took a break from budget-cutting to construct a new federal aid program—for union-fighting lawyers and consultants. The move allows hospitals to hire outside experts to help them combat unionism—at a cost that can total hundreds of thousands of dollars per campaign—and send the bills to Washington for reimbursement.

The decision diverts tens of millions of dollars from medical services, out of a Medicare budget already targeted for \$2.5 billion in cuts this year. It will also, according to Service Employees International Union president John Sweeney, be "disastrous" for patient care, because "anti-union campaigns divide workers against each other and their supervisors, hasten turnover and set in motion an ardently adversarial climate."

The decision reverses a 1979 Carter administration ruling that halted such reimbursements, on the logic that labor campaign costs are "not related to patient care and therefore are not allowable costs." Though the new rule directly affects only the health industry, it is likely to be felt elsewhere as well.

Unionists believe that the pre-1979 reimbursements helped turn hospitals into the leading testing ground for new, high-cost union-busting techniques, because administrators knew the taxpayers would foot the bill. The issue is especially charged, as hospitals are the number-one arena for union organizing. In 1980, for example, one newly organized union member in seven was a health worker.

Union officials seized on the recent decision as a particularly graphic example of the Reagan-era tilt against unions—but one on which they think the administration can be beat, either through congressional action or a lawsuit. So when the unionists brought their case to Capitol Hill for an April 1 House labor-management subcommittee hearing, the result was a heated and sometimes bizarre confrontation be-

tween union backers and congressional Reaganauts.

Rep. John Erlenborn (R-Ill.), the right wing's leading House spokesman on labor issues, told union witnesses that the Reagan decision was designed to restore "the First Amendment rights of hospital administrators" by allowing them to communicate with workers. Unionists explained that they seek only a cutoff of federal funding, not a ban on management campaigning. "How would you feel if we asked that our union organizing campaigns be paid for by the government?" asked United Food and Commercial Workers vice-president Arnold Mayer.

At one point, subcommittee chairman Phil Burton (D-Calif.) suggested that the Medicare decision was a signal to hospitals that the administration wants them to keep costs down by keeping unions out. If that's the goal, Burton asked sarcastically, why not "have a form of slavery? This would really cut the labor costs." The response from Rep. Eugene Johnston (R-N.C.) provoked stunned gasps from the audience: "That idea would be of great benefit to the American taxpayer. If you want it put forward, I will be delighted to second it." Burton advised him to retract his words, but Johnston said nothing.

Later, a Johnston spokesman said the congressman was "just jesting" and doesn't really believe in slavery.

—Steve Askin

So they didn't stop the press

NEW YORK—The New York *Daily News*, which employees have feared would be killed ever since the Tribune Co. of Chicago put the tabloid on the auction block before Christmas, got a reprieve this month. Texas multi-millionaire Joseph Allbritton, former owner of the defunct *Washington Star*, signed a letter of intent April 1 to buy the *News*, the larg-

est city daily in the country. But Allbritton's move was contingent on his reaching concession agreements with the paper's unions.

The surprise deal (perfectly timed, unfortunately, to make some of last week's *In These Times* story on the *News* out of date even as it was being printed) gives Allbritton 30 days to reach accords with each of the 11 unions, or the sale is off. But the reprieve could be short. On the first day of bargaining, Allbritton, who loses nothing if no accord is reached, demanded that unions give up 1,600 jobs and accept a wage freeze and a five-year no-strike contract. Also complicating negotiations are "me-too" clauses in the contracts, which specify that concessions given at the *Daily News* can be demanded by the New York *Post* (which is losing money) and the New York *Times*.

Some in the unions fear allowing personnel reductions at all three papers, only to have Allbritton close the *News* at a later date.

The unions could enter a partnership with Allbritton through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan. ("We don't know if he's interested yet," said a union spokesman.) If the negotiations fail, the unions feel they have a pledge from the Tribune Co. to negotiate to buy the paper themselves. (The Tribune Co. would not give another potential buyer, Donald Trump, what he wanted—a flat statement that the paper would be closed if agreements with the unions could not be reached.)

In a written statement, Allbritton said he does not believe the *News* fits the pattern of dying papers in the country and added that he believes the trend toward newspaper monopoly in American cities is "dangerous." He bought the *Washington Star* for \$35 million in 1974 and sold it in 1978 for \$20 million to Time, Inc., which later closed it. He also owns three New Jersey papers, including the *Trenton Times*, where a quarter of the editorial employees recently quit in protest of editorial policy changes under his regime. They say that under Allbritton the paper began pandering to advertisers and the business office won control over news decisions.

—Michael Hoyt

EL SALVADOR

Four scenes from an election

By Nelson Santana

SAN SALVADOR

THERE WAS AN ELECTRICAL charge in the air at the ARENA rally in San Salvador's gymnasium a few days before the election. Mariachi music blared from the stands, alternating with two party anthems ("El Salvador will be the tomb for the reds" and "Tremble, tremble, communists—the people know who their enemy is").

Young militants in designer jeans and Lacoste shirts swayed with red, white and blue party banners while cheerleaders, sporting the letter "A," did the bump and grind. But the center of attention was Major Roberto d'Aubuisson himself, bathed in floodlights as he raised his hands magnanimously in a vain attempt to calm the ovation. "My friends..." It was a triumph of the will.

On March 28, El Salvador held an election. According to the most reliable reports to date, some 1.2 million of El Salvador's population of 5 million went to the polls. This figure represents about two-thirds of the country's registered electorate of 1.8 million, but less than half of the 2.5 million citizens who are old enough to vote. This was not a bad turnout compared to the norm in the U.S., which has one of the least active electorates among Western democracies. But it paled beside the 85 to 90 percent turnout registered this year in Costa Rica and Honduras. Moreover, El Salvador's combined blank, no and spoiled ballots captured between 15 and 20 percent of the vote, running a close third behind the Christian Democrats and ARENA.

It was a remarkable campaign, and the two major antagonists approached it as a fight to the death. El Salvador is still about 60 percent illiterate, so much of the struggle was waged over the radio. The d'Aubuisson campaign, designed by the U.S. firm of McCann and Erickson, was brilliant in its blending of martial music, sloganeering and Duarte-baiting. One ad promised to "exterminate the subversives within two months." The Christian Democrats made a strong stand on an anti-extermination platform: "Vote no to those who will exterminate the people."

From the outset it was clear that the Christian Democrats would garner more votes than any other party, although a simple majority would remain beyond their reach. The pertinent question was what alliances would form within the Constituent Assembly to determine the real quotas of power, with the Christian Democrats tacitly depending on Democratic Action, a business-oriented party of the center-right, to join forces and put them over 50 percent. Instead, Democratic Action made a poor showing and aligned itself with ARENA and the other parties on the right. The Christian Democrats had the rug pulled out from under them—as d'Aubuisson's campaign manager had broadly hinted would happen.

On election day more than 400 members of the international press woke up in San Salvador and decided which story to cover. Basically, there were four choices: bang-bang (urban); bang-bang (rural); voting (rich people); and voting (poor people). Bang-bang (rural) was the least attractive. For days heavy fighting had been going on in Usulután, but the deaths of the four Dutch journalists had put a damper on most excursions to the countryside. Two days before the election a paramilitary unit in the province had opened fire on a carful of German and Swedish journalists, pinning them down for 25 minutes in a measure that was clearly designed to intimidate rather than to kill. TV crews had been chasing rural bang-bang for weeks and now they hinted that New York was getting tired of



On March 28 some 1.2 million Salvadorans went to the polls—about two-thirds of the registered voters but less than half of those old enough to vote.

Press vehicles were plastered with signs saying, "Journalists—sell out your country, not ours. Tell the truth!"

endless shots of troops tramping through the fields.

The urban bang-bang had the advantage of accessibility. Starting at dawn, there was mortar fire and helicopter attacks in the capitol's working class neighborhoods, spawning nasty fire fights that continued till dusk.

Inasmuch as nearly 200 journalists had been sent in just to cover the elections, the elections were going to be covered with a vengeance.

The eight polling places in the capitol were jammed—two weeks earlier Minister of Defense Guillermo Garcia had threatened that abstention would be considered "an act of treason." TV cameras made luxurious pans over the queues of voters as correspondents intoned grave praise for the Salvadorans' new-found enthusiasm for democracy.

ARENA had started a campaign against the international press in the days preceding the election. Any vehicle with press markings had been plastered

over with blue stickers saying, "Journalists—sell out your own country, not ours. Tell the truth!" The business sector had gone so far as to blame unfavorable reporting in the foreign press for the loss of its international credit rating. Now, as the cameras moved along the lines of voters in the prosperous suburbs of the capitol, ARENA supporters would lurch out of their places, shouting, "Tell the truth!"

What did the elections mean for Salvadorans? Consider three types of "average Salvadorans." The first (representing perhaps 40 percent of the population) is illiterate and rurally based. This Salvadoran has never lived under a legitimately elected president, has never enjoyed government benefits such as health care, education or even rural electrification. Nor were those issues brought up in the campaign.

Instead, this type could choose among personalities (mainly Duarte and d'Aubuisson), abstract concepts such as "reform" or "eliminating subversion" or party colors and symbols. The red, white and blue ersatz Americanism of ARENA suggested the backing of immense power and wealth, while the "little fish" of the Christian Democrats was perhaps the last vestige of the party's reformist Christian past.

For the "average Salvadoran" of the urban working classes, the elections had a hint of the "fiesta civica"—a bright spot of music, pamphleteering and mud-slinging in the midst of a crushingly long war and a collapsing economy. Political debate between the right and the center-right was encouraged for the first time in years.

ARENA supporters, the third type of Salvadoran, approached the elections with a sense of historical vindication. The Christian Democrats traditionally had more popular support than institutional backing from the Salvadoran powers-that-be. The erosion of their popular base left the Christian Democrats more susceptible to attacks from the private sector, which has nourished a special hatred for Duarte since his appointment.

It will be only two years ago this May that d'Aubuisson was caught red-handed planning a military coup. He was then imprisoned and allowed a genteel self-exile in Guatemala. Since that time he has slowly crawled back to power, and the major and his backers have demonstrated remarkable patience and finesse in constructing a facade of legitimacy for their cause. Now, building on the foundations of less than 10 percent of the potential vote as their electoral base, they have a good chance of calling most of the shots in the government now being formed.

In Ayutuxtepeque (in Salvador's indigenous dialect, "the place of the male iguana") the election-day fire fight began at dawn. By 9 a.m. 12 dead guerrillas and two dead soldiers were laid out in front of the town hall, and a Chilean photographer shot in the neck was to slowly bleed to death in a hospital over the next two days. By 10 a.m., the battle spread south to Mejicanos, a working-class slum due north of the national university. Mejicanos is a neighborhood where conflict can be tasted in the air. Glancing over the bleached walls scribbled with guerrilla graffiti and the streets dotted with government green, one had the unavoidable presentiment that it would be reduced to rubble within the space of two years.

Two reporters ducked into a corner store for an orange soda two blocks from the snipers' line of fire. The shopkeeper smiled at their bullet-proof vests and the trickles of sweat running down their faces. "You shouldn't be surprised," he said wickedly. "Don't you remember that General Gutierrez promised us last year that we'd have our elections—even under a hail of bullets?"

Some 30 or 40 guerrillas in a house up the road exchanged sporadic fire with government forces. A helicopter approached and strafed, attracted heavy ground fire and took off again. The guerrillas scored a hit on an armored vehicle and injured a major and a sergeant. The government troops tried 90 caliber mortar fire but were unable to get a direct line of fire. "And we didn't even get breakfast," grumbled one private. Others from his platoon swept through houses evacuated by the guerrillas and brought out armfuls of propaganda. They built small bonfires and stood lazily watching the papers burn.

In the Salvadoran language of war, "O-pa!" is the exclamation at a close round of fire or a direct hit. Heavy fighting is described as "buena." But the most telling terms is that used to describe people who are fighting against government forces. The government, the rich and the military say "los subversivos" or "los terroristas," but in neighborhoods like Mejicanos, people say "los muchachos" (the boys). The muchachos are so tightly woven into places like this that they can disappear from minute-to-minute. The soliders had braced themselves for an assault up the hill, but suddenly the resistance evaporated. When they reached the house, it was empty.

After 15 minutes its owner drifted back from taking shelter down the block. He had voted earlier that day. "I used to vote for the military party, but this time I voted for the people in power now," he explained.

The Christian Democrats?

"Yes, I always vote for the people in power."

Nelson Santana reports regularly for *In These Times* on Central American affairs.

Budget

Continued from page 3

each year. So far, with the recent action by Alaska, 31 of the needed 34 states have called for a constitutional convention to take up this issue. Currently, Washington, Kentucky and Missouri are locked in debate over it.

The second arm of the pincer is Congress. Duplicate language for a constitutional amendment has been introduced with 60 co-sponsors in the Senate and 170 in the House. The Senate measure, passed by the Judiciary Committee last May, is expected to come up for debate and a vote this spring. Action on the House version will probably not be as swift because liberal committee chairmen have blocked its path.

But the fast-moving threat of a state-mandated constitutional convention is expected to force congressional action on the amendment. A convention, which requires cooperation from Congress, has not been used to amend the constitution since the initial drafting in 1787, and Congress does not appear eager to set a precedent now. Washington views the idea of summoning citizens for a shot at redesigning any part of the Constitution as an invitation to havoc—a giant Pandora's Box swarming with single-issue advocates and special-interest factions. Instead of inviting this mischief, Congress apparently prefers what has be-

come the customary amendment practice.

For more than six years proponents of curbs on government such as the National Tax Limitation Committee (NTLC) and the National Taxpayers' Union (NTU) have toiled to contrive this pincer force on Congress. The NTLC, led by former Reagan aide Lewis K. Uhler, wants the government to confine taxes to a set ratio of national income so they cannot grow faster than the total economy. Section Two of the proposed amendment asserts that total federal receipts (taxes) in any fiscal year shall not increase by a rate greater than that of national income in the previous calendar year.

The NTU's goal is a balanced budget with no deficit, which is set out in Section One of the proposed amendment. It calls for a congressional "statement" each year of anticipated receipts and outlays, and requires them to balance. Deficit spending beyond this initial statement would only be allowed upon approval by three-fifths of the Congress.

As the bandwagon of support for the amendment gains momentum, scores of leading theoreticians and politicians are joining in the public battle, both pro and con. But noticeably absent from these ranks has been the leading advocate—Reagan himself. His absence from the fray may be one of his wisest political judgments to date: Given this year's record-high budget deficit, he probably believes that his active participation would be more of a hindrance than a help to the campaign. ■ ©Pacific News Service

Summer 1982

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EQUALITY • FOR JOBS OR INCOME, PEACE AND EQUALITY • FOR JOBS

NATIONAL CALL

To Form a Coalition Opposed to the Reagan Administration

The Reagan administration has declared war on the American people. Not since the Great Depression has there been such sweeping attacks on our very standard of living. The unions, social service programs, the environment, and especially the poor, minorities and women, and the elderly have borne the brunt of the crisis. The gains of the civil rights movement of the 60's are being quickly rolled back, encouraging a dangerous atmosphere of racism in the land. Unemployment stalks the land. The economy is slowly collapsing as inflation spirals out of control. And meanwhile the Reagan administration is giving the big corporations and monopolies the largest tax break ever.

Even as our cities sink further into decay, the Reagan administration has embarked on the greatest armament drive in world history. Not satisfied with the 30,000 nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal, the government plans to pour \$1.5 trillion of our tax dollars over the next five years to build weapons of unparalleled mass destruction like the MX missile, the neutron bomb, and the B-1 bomber. The government now openly boasts about limited nuclear war in Europe, first strike against the Soviet Union, and surviving casualties of "only" 50 million people.

In every city in the U.S., resistance to the Reagan administration is steadily growing. But the opposition is still based on single issues and is relatively scattered across the country.

The time has come to call for the formation of a national coalition opposed to the Reagan administration. The purpose of this letter is to issue a call to all concerned individuals and grass roots organizations to begin a national dialogue on forming such a broad-based coalition.

This coalition must target the policies of the Reagan administration and the top corporations that are reaping billions in super profits. An integral part of its work will be a counter attack against the current national resurgence of racism. This coalition must continue beyond the Reagan administration, as long as the government and top corporations continue the war drive and continue their attacks on the American people.

Experience has shown, however, that coalitions are often short-lived and formed around single issues. How will this coalition be different?

First, this coalition will not be a one-shot project to serve the short term interest of any one group. The coalescing of the progressive forces from all sectors of the country will be gradual. The coalition will be democratic from the very start. To ensure the broadest participation from grass roots organizations and individuals, several months will be spent on initiating dialogue among interested groups from a wide range of movements, for example, from the churches, from civil rights organizations, from women's groups, from anti-nuclear and peace organizations, from labor and community groups, etc. It is essential that the particular demands of members of the coalition be represented and pulled together into a people's program.

Second, instead of an ad-hoc body formed temporarily around a demonstration or referendum, the coalition must be an ongoing body where grass roots groups and individual activists from all over the country can affiliate. In other words, the coalition will be a federation rather than a single-issue coalition. The strength of the federation will be the ongoing grass roots struggles of its members in different cities and localities as well as its ability to pull together these forces for united and nationwide actions. The recent PATCO strike shows the urgent need for the American people to come together, across trade, nationality, and class lines, to back each other up. Through discussions, debates, mutual support, and united action, we hope to forge a lasting unity to resist the corporate and governmental attacks and fight for Jobs or Income, Peace and Equality.

Third, the local and regional chapters of the federation can initiate referendums and propositions that reflect the demands of its members and in this way act as our own "people's legislatures." We can even support local candidates, on a case-by-case basis, if they support or take up our demands and program. We will be partisan only to the program of the federation and the demands of its members rather than submitting to the lesser of any variety of evils on election day.

To be as democratic as possible, the precise program for such a federation must necessarily come from those grass-roots groups and individuals actively engaged in fighting the Reagan program. A national conference will be called in July, 1982 to hammer out key aspects of the program and organizational structure and to discuss a national action for the fall.

(Rev.) Philip Berrigan (for the
Rev. Philip Berrigan
Activist

Leonard Weinglass
Attorney

Benjamin Spock
Author

Elizabeth McAlister
Activist

Anne Braden
Southern Civil Rights & Peace Activist

Ronald Dellums
Rep., U.S. Congress

Nelson Johnson
Activist

Pete Seeger
Musician

Sidney Lens
Author

Richard Hatcher
Mayor of Gary, Indiana

Kitty Tucker
Non-Nuclear World,
Supporters of Sikkim

William Kunstler
Attorney

Michio Kaku
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Julian Bond
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ISRAEL

Behind the West Bank purges

By David Mandel

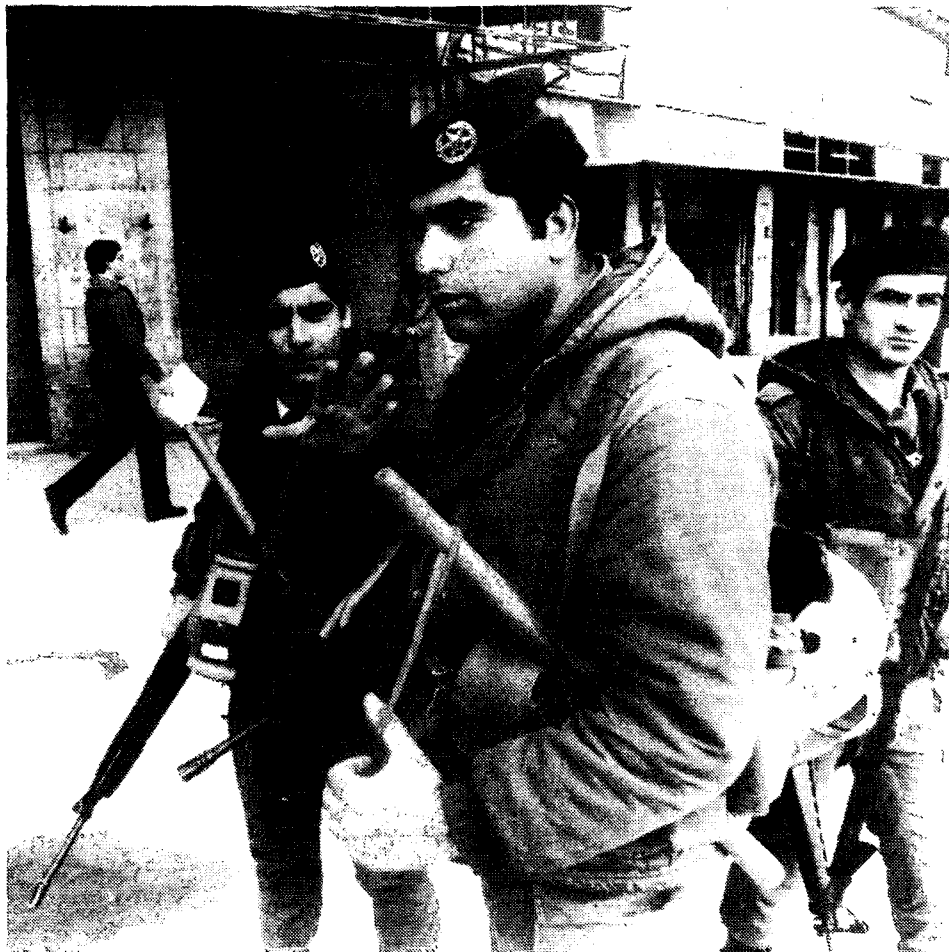
JERUSALEM

PROFESSOR MENACHEM MILSON—charged last November with trying to get Israel's "civil administration" to function on the occupied West Bank—calls the current upheaval there "the decisive battle to root out the PLO from the territories." Defining the situation this way throws Israeli doves off balance, because for most Israelis any reference to the PLO conjures up terrorist images.

Yet some Israelis in high places are beginning to question publicly several of the assumptions behind the government's decision to initiate a head-on confrontation with PLO influence in the territories. And the peace movement's various factions are regrouping for a renewed attempt to gain public support.

A large portion of the debate centers on the nature of this "PLO influence." Milson brashly asserts that it is only the result of pressure and threats, without which the vast majority of the population would gladly accept the benefits of limited self-rule offered in the Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt. To prove his point, Milson cites the "village leagues" sponsored by Israel in several rural regions of the West Bank. As funded patronage powers that are now armed by the military government, the leagues are in the process of establishing a power base. Their leaders denounce the PLO.

In a move that contributed to precipitating the current unrest, even Jordan—the PLO's traditional rival for influence on the West Bank—denounced the leagues and threatened to sentence to death anyone found guilty of collaborating with them. Milson interpreted this as proof that the leagues are now a serious threat to the PLO, which has effected an uneasy reconciliation with Jordan's King Hussein in recent years. But a great deal of wind was taken out of the argument by the recently retired military commander of the



Israeli border police forced striking Arab shopkeepers in East Jerusalem to open their stores.

turned into a hot political battle between Premier Menachem Begin's Likud and the Labor Party, whose chairman Shimon Peres, defense minister at the time, angrily rejects charges that he was responsible for "letting the PLO in through the back door."

The debate can be understood only by reviewing Israeli-Palestinian relations on the West Bank since 1976, when Peres gambled in allowing the elections. Labor's admitted aim was to legitimize the pro-Jordan, traditional leadership and lay the foundation for an eventual "territorial compromise" with Hussein. But in a surprising display of political maturity, the PLO in Beirut decided not to call for a boycott of the vote. Its supporters then swept into office in almost every city.

For several years thereafter, the mayors successfully walked a tightrope. Israel's insistence on "no politics" was gladly observed to deflect any suggestion that they might constitute an alternative Palestinian leadership. But the mayors unanimously rejected the occupation and explicitly favored Palestinian independence, alongside Israel and at peace with it.

In Beirut, Yassir Arafat could hardly hold back reciprocal backing for the popularly elected mayors, and he easily swallowed their apparent deviation from official PLO dogma: as long as Israel rejected the West Bank-Gaza Strip state idea, the Palestinians did not have to face the trauma of compromise in practice.

In the occupied territories themselves, however, a strong consensus galvanized around the mayors' views: recognition of the PLO and acceptance of coexistence in an independent state alongside Israel. This formula soon gained currency around the world, and for a brief moment at Camp David it appeared that Israel itself might be moving in such a direction when Begin spoke of "the Palestinians' legitimate rights."

But now, three years, several small wars and thousands of settlers after the peace treaty with Egypt, Begin is clearly unwilling to accept anything approaching Palestinian self-determination. Two of the West Bank mayors elected in 1976 were deported across the Lebanese border in May 1980 after an attack that left six settlers dead in Hebron. Three more, including two whose legs were blown off by car bombs, have now been dismissed. Most of the others, plus other leading figures in the territories, are restricted to their homes or

towns and kept from meeting each other. Their phones are often cut off, and now their constituents, in open rebellion against the occupation, are under siege. Five Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed in the recent fighting, and scores more injured.

The mayors' dismissals were accompanied by official press releases, complete with "documentation," accusing them of inciting the population and abetting actual terror attacks. Hearing such charges, many Israelis must have wondered why the mayors were not locked up long ago, along with thousands of other Palestinians convicted of hostile intent or contact with the PLO. To deflect such difficult questions, Milson and Begin have simply blamed the opposition for letting the mayors get elected in the first place. This tactic makes sense with election fever in the air following the coalition's loss of its one-vote majority through an extreme hawkish defection and a parliamentary stalemate.

The Israeli opposition.

Peres' response was that the crackdown is counterproductive. Firing the mayors was "hasty," he said. It makes Israel "look like colonialists." The territories have been quiet during most of the period since the 1976 elections, he added, but offered no new idea of how to deal with the basic Palestinian rejection of Israeli rule.

But Peres, and several other former high officials in the military government speaking out for the first time, admit that the PLO enjoys substantial support in the territories. In contrast, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir tried to justify the crack-

down by claiming its purpose is "to give the moderate majority among the Palestinians the chance to say its piece and participate democratically in the determination of its own future."

Few Israelis believe that a "moderate majority" exists, and as Shamir, Begin and Milson (and Peres) define "moderate" to mean anti-PLO, it definitely does not exist. The ensuing credibility gap between this official wishful thinking and the mass rebellion in the territories leads most Israelis to resigned acceptance of the army fighting all those "murderous PLO supporters."

Only a few left Israelis have crossed the Rubicon and visualize the possibility of peace with the Palestinians by dealing with the PLO and accepting a state led by it alongside Israel. Even the Peace Now movement, which awoke from a long dormancy to organize an impressive demonstration of 50,000 (organizers' estimate) against the government on March 27, is still unwilling directly to buck years of stereotyping—accompanied, of course, by real terror attacks—that have made the PLO taboo. Peace Now echoed Labor's dovish wing in criticizing "annexation, oppression and bloodshed" because they "damage our image."

Israel's left-wing parties, which have united in the Committee for Solidarity with Birzeit University (closed again in February by the military authorities) to oppose the occupation as a whole, participated in the Peace Now rally as a bloc. Their call for an independent Palestinian state did not meet with hostility.



Menachem Milson calls the current upheaval "the decisive battle."

Some observers note that events in which a clear "peace option" can be perceived now meet with more moderate public responses. Tens of thousands have signed petitions over the last few months opposing "the uprooting of settlements" in Sinai. But to the great disappointment of anti-withdrawal diehards, only a few hundred have actively resisted the evacuation. All the others appear to believe that a "chance for peace" is more important.

In another example, settlers along Israel's northern border, including many well-known as hawks, were among the loudest opponents of "adventurism" earlier this year when the government seemed about to invade southern Lebanon. The sudden doves had been sobered by the experience of last summer, when previous Begin promises that no more rockets would fall on their towns and villages dissolved in a sustained bombardment. Now, the cease-fire with the PLO, which has been in effect since July 1981, seems far preferable to a renewal of the fighting.

Begin's government is now making a final attempt to finish off "PLO dominance" of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Fewer and fewer people here see such a goal as realistic, and numerous polls in the past have shown that a large majority of Israelis believe that peace is not possible without a solution to the Palestinian problem. But a clear option that could convince a majority of Israelis that Israel-Palestine peace is possible, and worth the still unthinkable risks, has not been proposed.

Premier Begin is now making a final attempt to finish off "PLO dominance"—a goal few Israelis see as realistic.

West Bank, General Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, who, while sharing the accepted anti-PLO stance, called the leagues a "scarecrow under army protection" and admitted that the PLO has mass public support in the territories.

The Israeli news media confirmed this view by stressing that the current unrest in the territories goes far beyond the "common incidents" in which schoolchildren taunt soldiers with stones and are occasionally fired upon. This time, men and women of all ages are at the barricades, expressing anger at the summary dismissal of three elected pro-PLO West Bank mayors, and the commercial strike called in solidarity is being enthusiastically observed in most towns.

Israeli policy concerning the West Bank mayors has also become difficult for the government to explain. Until very recently, official propaganda pamphlets boasted of the "free municipal elections" that brought them to office in 1976. Now Milson and others have started charging that the votes were rigged because of PLO intimidation. Furthermore, the issue has

Article by
Dan Biggs and Joel Parker

SAN FRANCISCO

Bullet trains whiz across Texas. TGVs crisscross Ohio. Congress routinely approves long-term Amtrak subsidies. An improbable vision of American rail passenger service, circa 1990? Not if the proposals rail passengers are advocating these days are taken seriously.

State transportation authorities, the AFL-CIO and independent experts have all recently proposed programs calling for a rail passenger renaissance. Alarmed by Amtrak's constrained performance and uncertain mandate, each hopes to rescue the passenger train from the logjam of federal antagonism.

Meanwhile, Amtrak officials have devised their own blueprint for the future. Their strategy, unveiled in the heat of last year's battle with the Reagan administration, entails a curious blend of belt-tightening, self-reliance and Japanese goodwill. By 1985, company officials promise that Amtrak will no longer require federal operating subsidies, and they hope a new program of revenue diversification will eventually eliminate the need for capital subsidies as well.

Amtrak's new-found goal of self-sufficiency is as much a product of desperation as conviction. "We're thrashing about trying to find some way to avoid the constant deterioration of the system because of the funding problems," says Amtrak president Alan Boyd.

His search for a stable funding life line has led Amtrak to shelve expansion plans and back efforts by President Carter and Reagan to eliminate some of its most unprofitable trains. Amtrak officials promise that within three years any train that cannot make a profit or break even from passenger revenues will be dropped. With operating subsidies no longer needed, they hope the government will make a long-term commitment to subsidize Amtrak "on the same basis that every other travel mode is subsidized"—in other words, routinely fund infrastructure costs.

Frustration over government refusal to make good on promised capital funding accounts for the other part of Amtrak's plan—revenue diversification. According to Boyd, Amtrak will generate \$75 million a year by the end of this decade from real estate activities such as selling or leasing its valuable urban properties to private developers. Other schemes include developing a fiber optics communications system with a private consortium along the Amtrak-owned Northeast Corridor and contracting out repair and training services at Amtrak maintenance facilities. Boyd concedes that "it's pure guesswork" as to how much revenue such activity will generate.

Critics suggest that an unintended consequence of Amtrak's self-sufficiency effort—and potentially its Achilles heel—is that it locks Amtrak into a no-growth policy. Amtrak's estimated capital needs for 1983 total \$200 million, and that will only keep the current barebones system healthy. Expanding the route network or adding more trains would require a much greater capital commitment. Revenue diversification cannot generate funds anywhere near the magnitude necessary for expansion unless Amtrak goes the way of the defunct Penn Central and makes non-rail ventures its primary activity—a course Amtrak officials say they will not follow.

"A no-growth policy will kill off Amtrak," asserts long-time rail advocate Ronald Sheck, associate professor at New Mexico State University and author of a recent study on Amtrak's prospects commissioned by members of Congress from New Mexico. Sheck argues that Amtrak's meager capacity is responsible for its

need for high yearly operating subsidies. "At the existing level of service and the existing level of subsidy, we won't have an Amtrak five years from now," he warns.

Amtrak has not quite relinquished its dreams of expansion. Boyd has long advocated the development of high-speed, multi-frequency corridor trains connecting major cities of intermediate distance, like Chicago-Detroit and Chicago-Milwaukee. An ambitious plan to commence developing a dozen such corridors was squelched last year when the Department of Transportation (DOT) vigorously opposed it, and key members of Congress intimated they would support corridors only as a substitute for current long-distance routes.

Amtrak began searching for funding alternatives, and found, according to vice president Clark Tyler, "a holy grail in the garage." Japanese philanthropist Riochi Susagawa donated "up to \$5 million" last year to Japanese National Railways (JNR) to study the feasibility of launching a Bullet Train on the Amtrak system.

The fanfare heated up last fall. Henry Reuss (D-Wis.) introduced legislation to have Amtrak acquire rights-of-way for bullet trains between 20 cities. And Amtrak announced the convening of the first-ever Japan-U.S. Rail Congress, a delegation of 10 members of the Japanese Diet and 15 members of Congress to "further the transfer of high-speed train technology" to the U.S. Finally, on March 31, Amtrak unveiled a new private company, the American High Speed Rail Corporation, whose goal is to raise \$2 billion to build a Bullet Train between Los Angeles and San Diego.

The prospect of 150-mph electrified trains blurring across the American countryside on brand new rights-of-way unimpeded by plodding freight trains entices Amtrak management. To Boyd, a showcase Bullet Train "would change the image of rail passenger service by a factor of 10 and lead to greater public support for the balance of the system."

But the Bullet Trains' greatest allure stems from the belief that the trains will be as profitable as their Japanese prototypes, and thus private development capital would be easy to attract. Reuss' bill, for example, would have Amtrak borrow construction money from private lending institutions—no federal funding would be necessary. Amtrak's own scenario envisages privately financed Bullet Trains co-existing with the unprofitable, publicly financed remainder of the system. Profits from the Bullet Trains would be returned to their private backers.

Leaving aside the potential conflicts such a hybrid structure would pose, many transportation experts think the Bullet Train predilection may be premature. "The French only created a TGV once the Paris-Lyon route reached the saturation level," says Sheck. "This is two or three decades down the road in the U.S."

Anthony Haswell, founder of the National Association of Rail Passengers (NARP), argues that the massive expense

of building new rights-of-way for American TGVs, plus the ecological opposition such construction might engender, makes such construction future train service toward 70 to 80 mph average speeds" on upgraded, existing roadbeds a more rational alternative. Ironically, this was precisely Amtrak's original corridor concept. It was scrapped only because the prospect of private funding for Bullet Trains seemed less illusory than fantasies of the government funding conventional corridors.

A mtrak's drive for profitability also involves a dramatic shift in its current ridership base. The road to a zero operating deficit by 1985 is paved with higher fares, and many of Amtrak's current customers will not be able to afford the ride.

A disproportionate percentage of today's Amtrak travellers are senior citizens, students and low and middle-income families. A recent Amtrak survey found that the bulk of riders on long-distance routes earned less than \$18,000 a year and 40 percent earned less than \$14,000. Amtrak officials increasingly talk of the need to attract a more affluent business clientele that would pay significantly higher fares. Much of their determination to expand corridor service and initiate a Bullet Train reflects their experience that fast, short-haul trains like the Eastern Metroliners cater almost exclusively to this part of the population.

Many Amtrak officials privately acknowledge their concern that a growing number of Americans may be priced out

of rail travel, but point out that it is not their job to set social policy. Meanwhile, Reagan's goal of having "users" pay for a higher percentage of travel costs threatens to exacerbate an imminent mobility crisis. As auto and air prices escalate, Amtrak could—at least in theory—offer a much-needed, inexpensive alternative for would-be travellers, but the government-imposed emphasis on profitability precludes such a development.

Several states—angry at what they feel is Amtrak's inadequate response to the growing transportation crisis—are developing their own plans for a passenger train alternative to the automobile. In Ohio, dissatisfaction with Amtrak's slow running speeds and skimpy service has sparked a proposal to bypass Amtrak altogether and create a state-run system. In California, an ardent pro-rail state transportation director is trying to wrest control from Amtrak over the operation of state-supported trains.

Ohio's plan calls for making it the passenger train mecca of the U.S. The Ohio Rail Transportation Authority (ORTA) has proposed a \$6 billion system of 150-mph passenger trains to link nearly every major city in the state. Several financing methods are being debated, including raising the state sales tax, and supporters, buoyed by favorable public opinion

Photograph: Ron Thums



Photograph: Diane Schmidt



At the Crossroads

polls, hope to inaugurate the system within a decade.

Meanwhile, California's Department of Transportation (CalTrans) director Adriana Gianturco has excoriated Amtrak for continual fare hikes, limited advertising efforts and timidity when negotiating with the private railroad for reductions in schedule times. Under Gianturco's direction, the state once known as the freeway capital of America now leads the nation with seven state-supported Amtrak trains that annually cost \$5.5 million. Although a staunch defender of Amtrak at Washington cutback hearings, Gianturco's conviction that California isn't getting its money's worth led to an unsuccessful attempt last year to take over marketing, pricing and scheduling on Amtrak trains. Undaunted, California will sponsor a meeting of other states later this year to discuss strategies to make Amtrak more responsive.

But state efforts to circumvent the lack of federal support for Amtrak may collapse as the burden of Reagan's cuts in a host of social programs starts to drain state treasuries. California's budget is plummeting from black to red, making it unlikely that Gianturco's successor at CalTrans will be able to continue her pro-rail policies.

Hopes for high-speed train service in Ohio and adjoining states are also dimming. Hard hit by recession, Michigan's general revenues were down 20 percent

in 1981, and Ohio Governor James Rhodes is trying to eliminate ORTA's funding. In this context, Reagan's "New Federalism" appears as the pallbearer of the Midwestern rail revival.

Other proposals now circulating argue that Amtrak's maladies could be cured by a hefty dose of federal funding. The AFL-CIO, for example, recently urged restoration of Amtrak budget cuts and additional money to develop 20 high-speed rail corridors as well as federal action to upgrade track and equipment on the private railroads.

But the most ambitious and comprehensive proposal, Sheck's *Amtrak 90: A Route to Success*, maintains that the problem is not only the paucity of subsidy, but also how it has been spent. Sheck argues that through a carefully planned program of capital investment, Amtrak could attain self-sufficiency by 1988, and even turn a profit by the end of the decade—at a cost \$1 billion less than what is now projected to maintain the status quo.

According to Sheck, the key is vastly to expand capacity on Amtrak's existing system, thereby reducing the enormous

drain of fixed infrastructure costs (56 percent of Amtrak's total expenses in 1980). To accomplish this, Sheck would have Congress vote Amtrak a capital budget of roughly \$2.6 billion over a nine-year period to purchase new passenger cars and locomotives. The program would be implemented in three stages: new equipment would be added to existing trains, then new trains to current routes, and finally new routes to connect existing terminals. While fares would rise only to keep pace with inflation, revenues would soar due to increased ridership and infrastructure costs would barely rise at all—thus "freeing Amtrak from the deficit cycle."

Sheck's proposal envisages a comprehensive national network through planned growth, in contrast to the fragmentation of rail passenger service that might result from state initiatives or a disproportionate investment in a few Bullet Train routes. According to Sheck, his plan builds upon Amtrak's strengths, such as its new reservations system, its new and rebuilt equipment and, most important, the existing tracks and currently underutilized switching yards, stations and maintenance facilities. Furthermore, Sheck says, this type of a growth strategy would produce about 40,000 new jobs over the balance of this decade, and he believes this would entice rail labor unions to grant concessions on work rules.

Although Sheck is widely known and respected in rail passenger advocate circles, his plan has not yet sparked interest among Amtrak management or significant numbers of politicians. But even if his plan clears those hurdles, rail industry insiders point out a potentially unscalable obstacle to a major expansion of Amtrak operations—the private railroads.

To hear company officials tell it, Amtrak's once-stormy relationship with the private railroads that run its trains has now settled into an uneasy truce. But the price of Amtrak-railroad detente is expensive. Amtrak shells out millions of

dollars annually as "incentives" to the railroads to run the trains on time. The "incentives" in turn deter the railroads from negotiating faster schedules. Laborious efforts by Amtrak to eliminate schedule "padding" have usually taken years to achieve even minimal results. And to preserve the peace, Amtrak has tabled plans to seek congressional authority to collect monetary penalties from railroads that persist in delaying passenger trains in favor of freights.

Several sources also claim that the railroads massively overcharge Amtrak for services. An Amtrak official, who requests anonymity, says, "I just saw the figures for a railroad supposedly friendly to Amtrak. Five hundred dollars a stop for watering the trains. The charges were ridiculous. Putting in new faucets cost \$1000 for a 10-foot piece of plumbing." Top Amtrak officials adamantly deny such subterfuge, claiming that a sophisticated auditing system installed in 1975 ended such practices. But an official in the Auditing Department admits that Amtrak must basically rely on trust in its railroad dealings.

Railroad officials offer a different perspective on the current Amtrak-railroad embrace. "Amtrak right now has few enough trains so that it's not a pest to the movement of freight," says Chris Knapton of the AAR (Association of American Railroads). "But there are an awful lot of railroaders who are afraid of what's going to happen 10 years down the road. How can you operate an expanded Amtrak system in the midst of volumes of freight forecasted to double by the year 2000?"

Merger trends in the industry may also fuel railroad opposition to Amtrak expansion of the scale Sheck proposes. Already, only seven carriers haul 80 percent of freight ton-miles, and Carter's deregulation of the industry facilitates future consolidations. "You're going to see a streamlining of the plant toward a super rail freight factory," predicts Knapton. "It will make it very difficult to run more than one passenger train a day over mainlines carrying increasingly heavy volumes of freight."

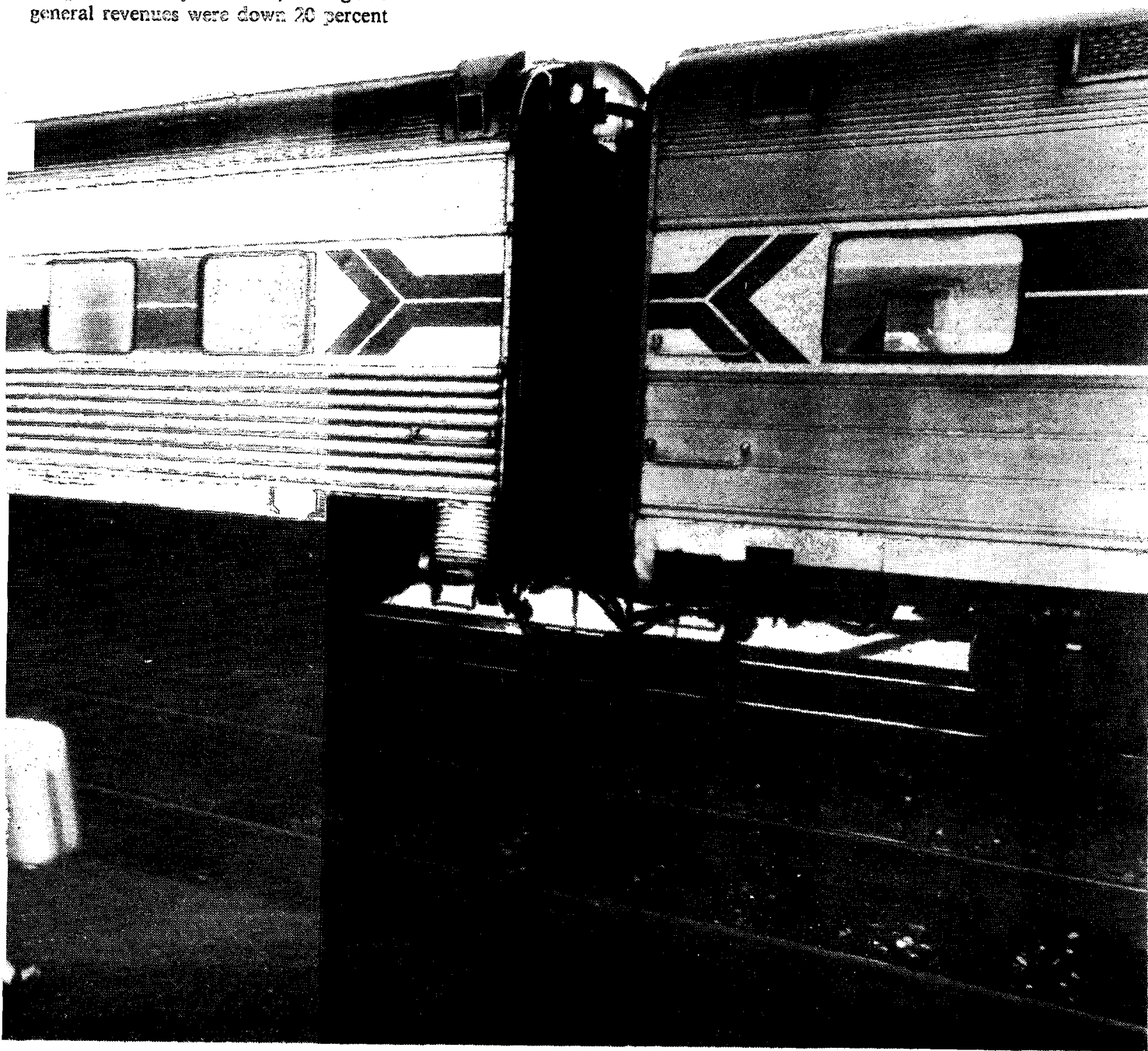
Despite his pessimism, Knapton supports expanded rail passenger service, but believes the solution is to follow the Japanese model of building a separate right-of-way for ground passenger transport. But Amtrak leaders, skeptical that government funding for wholly separate roadbeds is a realistic possibility, instead hope that the merger movement won't have such dire effects. "We're going to wind up with six or seven major rail systems, and they will be financially healthy companies," Boyd says. "That will mean improved mainlines, and those are the routes over which we operate."

Other industry spokesmen dispute the likelihood of the emerging super-railroads welcoming Amtrak trains cluttering their improved mainlines, especially if Reagan is successful at ending federal assistance for track improvement projects. And experts predict 40,000 miles of track abandonments by the end of this decade, some of which will involve urban arteries needed by Amtrak but not by freights.

In all the speculation now flourishing about what direction rail passenger service should take, one alternative is conspicuously absent—consolidation of Amtrak and the private railroads under public control. Although nationalized railroad systems are the rule even in the capitalist economies of Europe and Japan, a decade of U.S. political conservatism has banished the nationalization alternative from mainstream political debate.

Even the more modest scheme of nationalizing only the roadbeds—with private railroad companies paying to use the tracks like Amtrak now pays the privates—is seen as wildly out of touch with current political realities. As recently as

Continued on page 14



LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

THE BUTTER-UP SYNDROME

DSA (NEE DSOC) IS ABOUT THE ONLY left group that advocates "working in" the Democratic Party. Since most criticism of DSA has been leveled at the very idea of engaging in this sort of activity, there has been very little serious discussion of the quality and quantity of work DSA actually does in this arena. The editorial March 24 and the article March 31 were a welcome change. Especially to those of us who belong to and support DSA but are frustrated by its lack of results.

Here is the problem: The DSA leadership is obsessed with top-down "coalitions" with any big-shot who is willing to have his picture taken with "known socialists" such as Michael Harrington. Everything else is subordinated to this pursuit of making socialism acceptable to semi-liberal politicians and quasi-progressive union leaders.

The immediate consequence is that rank-and-file DSA members are forever barred from taking any role in electoral politics. After all, there is virtually no democratic primary in the country where the local union/party establishment doesn't have its favorite candidate. Independent left initiatives in those races invariably threaten to destroy the fragile "coalitions" that have been formed at Debs-Thomas dinners.

So while DSA leaders butter up luminaries, the membership is reduced to inane activities that threaten no one, and are designed precisely to demonstrate that socialism is a harmless concept and socialists are silly people. Hence the endless promotion of "socialist hot dog roasts," "socialist beer blasts," "potlucks with Penny" and the like in which chapters are absorbed.

And who is the winner? When DSA presents an award to the architect of the UAW givebacks, does this really make socialism more acceptable to the American people? Or does it simply

make givebacks more acceptable to the left?

We endorse James Weinstein's (and the IAM's) call for a host of candidates in democratic primaries at every level. The essence of these candidates should be a sharp attack on the existing political status quo as represented by the Democratic Party establishment. Let the paper "coalitions" fall where they may. In our view such a strategy would result in a far broader coalition—one with the rank-and-file of the American people themselves, as well as the many progressive union leaders and politicians who have been largely ignored in the present round of coalitions—people like the UAW's Bob Weissman and Cleveland's Dennis Kucinich.

—Bruce C. Allen
Democrats for Change, Cleveland

CITIZENS PARTY

AS A MEMBER OF THE CITIZENS PARTY in northern California, I was especially pleased to see your editorial (ITT, March 24). As you have noted before, the Citizens Party has had to struggle, often without much success, to get coverage in the mass media. It is especially important that our friends on the left, and particularly your readers, know that the Citizens Party is alive and well and pushing forward with a program to establish a viable third party alternative for the 1982 elections and beyond. I would also like to point out that the Citizens Party is something more than the electoral success story of Burlington, Vt. In California, for instance, the Citizens Party is collecting signatures to qualify an initiative for the November ballot to provide affordable housing for low and moderate income persons by imposing additional taxes on high income earners, large corporations and by abolishing the California capital gains exemption.

—Mark Coby
San Francisco

MAKE WAY, PINKTOES

I APPRECIATE BOB CLAIBORNE'S REMARKS (ITT, Mar. 31) pertaining to the Bob Cohen review (ITT, Mar. 17) of Dunaway's Pete Seeger biography. Claiborne tells it like it is. I remember Pete Seeger as a young man down here in Louisiana where we were both active in the Progressive Party. Of course, Seeger, like Paul Robeson, was traveling all over the country singing the workers' and people's songs while I was pretty well confined to stumping the state to get Henry Wallace on the ballot in Louisiana. Let there never be any doubt as to Seeger's tremendous contribution to the workers' struggle for peace, freedom and justice.

As to the question of who now remembers Sen. Theodore Bilbo, I remember the sonofabitch like I remember Dies, Eastland, HUAC and all the other witch-hunters. I offer one caveat: All who cling to any hopes that the first decade of the 21st century will see the demise of capitalism and the advent of democratic socialism had better start eliminating these pseudo-socialist party-waists who keep sticking their little pink toes into the class struggle, jumping back and shivering until they can raise the courage to stick them in again. Let them plunge in or get out of the way.

—Ted Means
New Orleans

SOMEONE'S WRONG

A PHOTO ACCOMPANYING DAVID Roediger's review of *There Is a River* (ITT, March 24) shows several black men demonstrating in New York City with signs hung around their necks. The caption speaks of "the struggles of little known black men and women" whose contributions are recounted in the book. I might be wrong, but the first man in the photo on the right sure looks like A. Philip Randolph to me—not exactly "little-known." My guess is that the photo is from 1960 or 1961.

—Paul J. Balcich
Fort Washington, Md.

REPUBLICAN SOCIALISTS

I READ WITH GREAT INTEREST MORRIS Dickstein's review of T. Jackson Lears' *No Place of Grace* and Lears' response (ITT, Feb. 17, 24). As a conservative, a Republican and a socialist, I can identify with Lears' "anti-modernist" ideals. I have long struggled to reconcile my conservative Republicanism with my socialism, and each time conclude that its logical basis resides in a set of ideas that I, like Lears, would take pages to explain. Lears, by explaining this historical phenomenon far more clearly and cohesively than I possibly could, and giving it a name, confers upon it a legitimacy that makes it a full-fledged part of both our political culture and the socialist movement in the United States.

My pro-free enterprise friends, I find, generally support liberal, pro-modernist values, especially in areas of sexual freedom, drug use (including alcohol and cigarettes), pornography and other "individual liberties." They recognize more readily than most socialists that there is very little difference between the argument "Who is the government to tell me what I can put in my body (e.g., drugs)!!!" and "Who is the government to tell me whom I can hire in my business?!". These friends view my conservative values and strong community attachment as old-fashioned and *passe*.

In our quest to build a popular movement for socialism in the United States, we must not forget that socialism can be the savior of home, family and community, and free enterprise their enemy and destroyer in the name of making a buck. When modernist monstrosities like the "me-generation," consumer culture, permissiveness in morality, sex and violence

on TV, trashy advertising, junk food, pornography, etc., get laid squarely on the doorstep of capitalism where they belong, socialism may surprise itself by drawing in conservatives, Republicans and other typical "average Americans."

Conservatism and Republicanism have always been compatible with socialism (e.g., the first and only socialist legislature in U.S. history was the pre-WWI North Dakota legislature dominated by socialist Non-partisan League Republicans; many Prohibitionist suffragists had socialist leanings). Not all conservatives are as captivated by free enterprise as President Reagan.

A popular movement for socialism in the United States can be more than a dream if and only if socialism reaches out to all potential support groups, including conservative anti-modernist elements of our society. Democrats and Republicans divide into various factions over non-party issues. Far from fragmenting them, these divisions broaden their constituencies and give them strength. So too can socialism embrace liberal (pro-modernist) and conservative (anti-modernist) elements in its quest to forge a popular movement for socialism in these United States. If it is not willing to do this, it is not really serious about building a successful movement.

—Dino Joseph Drudi
Washington, D.C.

MARXISM AND THE LEFT

I NTERPRETATIONS OF MARX'S VIEW of socialism are mirrored in the ideas and policies that guide socialist practice. Thus, Richard Lichtman ("Individualism and Liberty," ITT, Mar. 30) is right to make the point forcefully and clearly that Marx identified socialism neither as collectivism nor as a perfected bourgeois individualism, but as a unity of collectivism and individualism.

But I find Lichtman's recourse to Marx and to the rhetoric of Marxist socialism to legitimate left politics in the U.S. troublesome. Let me explain. Though Marx's ideal of socialism projected a unity of individualism and community, his writings totally fail to ground, either historically or theoretically, the idea of a moral community. Nowhere does Marx specify the cultural traditions and values that would underlie social solidarity in a socialist order. In fact, Marx's tendency to view "late" bourgeois culture as exhausted and all individuality as extinguished, leaves one wondering just how and in what form could individuality and community crystallize in socialist. Interestingly, Lichtman remains orthodox in this regard: "Genuine individuality vanishes in a capitalist society."

Without specifying the forms of culture and individuality in bourgeois society that would emerge and, in a transfigured form, be the basis of autonomy and community in socialism, we are left with a one-dimensional view of socialism as either an extension of bourgeois atomistic individualism or statism. The failure of Marxism to pose the problem of solidarity and moral community seriously reflects Marxists' inclination to suppress culture and individual agency at an epistemological level. Marx, it seems, capitulated to the very reductionism he claimed to oppose.

Moreover, and here I will overstate my case to highlight my point, whatever relevancy Marxism may have in Europe, it does not have the same resonance in America. By adopting the rhetoric of Marxism the American left only further estranges itself from mainstream politics—especially from possible alliances with liberal democrats—and discredits itself in the eyes of most "radical" Americans, for whom Marxism and socialism is an obnoxious statism.

The American left needs to go beyond Marx. We need to recover currents and visions that are indigenous to the American experience and translate them into a democratic politics.

—Steven Seidman
Las Cruces, N.M.

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PERSPECTIVES



These days the media even interview guerrillas, something unheard of during the Vietnam War.

By Dan Hallen

IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASY TO get the American public to accept distant wars for dubious causes. Lyndon Johnson was able to escalate in Vietnam only with the aid of a delicate program of news management. The trick was to alarm the people enough that Vietnam would be seen as vital to "national security," but not so much as to raise the specter of another Korean stalemate. It was accomplished by thundering loudly about Communist aggression while keeping as silent as possible about actual plans for future American involvement.

The Reagan administration has been trying to walk this same thin line since its first days in office. But this time news management is falling flat. A majority of the public, according to most polls, fears El Salvador will become the next Vietnam, roughly 80 percent oppose the sending of U.S. combat troops, and, perhaps most striking of all, 51 percent, according to an ABC News-Washington Post poll, say they would support young men who refused to be drafted to fight in Central America.

With its public relations efforts clearly

For media, it's not another Vietnam

failing it is no surprise the Reagan administration is beginning to lash out at the press. Like his predecessors in the early days of the Vietnam war, Reagan has called for "self-censorship" in the interest of national security. The press, he argued in a *TV Guide* interview, should "trust us and put themselves in our hands"; they should consult with officials and hold back on stories "that will result in harm to our nation."

The media, in fact, are becoming the number one scapegoat for the ineffectiveness of Reagan's get-tough policy. The *Wall Street Journal* has led the charge at home, accusing the media in a Feb. 10 editorial of "romanticizing the revolutionaries," and hinting that they were in large part responsible for the success of the Chinese, Cuban, Vietnamese and Iranian revolutions. In El Salvador, the right wing's hatred of the press took a sinister turn with the recent kill-

ing of four Dutch journalists who had made contact with the guerrillas.

Blaming the press for foreign policy failures is nothing new. The Kennedy administration leveled charges of bias and inexperience against the Saigon press corps in the early '60s, long before there was any "Vietnam syndrome." But the media have become skeptical of administration policy much more rapidly, much more deeply and apparently with much more effect on public opinion than was the case in Vietnam.

Coverage of Reagan policy in Central America didn't start out at all critical. Before Reagan came to office, what little El Salvador coverage there was had focused primarily on El Salvador itself, often stressing the human rights emphasis of the Carter administration. But "when the administration came out with this White Paper [*Communist Interference in El Salvador*]," said UPI Mexico City

bureau chief Juan Tamayo, "all the news was communist intervention, communist intervention. Nobody in Washington bothered to mention that this thing had been going on for years, that the guerrillas had been around for a long time, that the government itself...has been accused of human rights violations."

By the end of the administration's first month in office ABC News was introducing stories on "El Salvador and other aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations." Said Mark Seibel of the *Dallas Times-Herald*, "The Reagan administration in this case played the Washington press corps like a harp."

But the administration's cold war rhetoric was a double-edged sword. It changed the terms of news coverage, but it also made El Salvador an issue as it had never been before. "If the Reagan administration hadn't hit the alarm bell," said the *Washington Post's* Chris Dickey, "there would not be the coverage there is now. The press did not make El Salvador a test case. The Reagan administration did." With the secretary of state saying the lesson of Vietnam was simply not to leave the "source [of supply] outside the target area," the media were bound to catch on to the Vietnam parallel sooner or later. When they did, the Reagan administration discovered it had created a monster.

Interviewing guerrillas.

There are now nearly 300 foreign journalists in El Salvador, with many more in the "next El Salvador," Guatemala. And the reporting is strikingly different from the early years of Vietnam.

Take the recent CBS documentary, "Central America in Revolt." In Vietnam, the historical background of the conflict rarely crept into the daily battle report which was the mainstay of news coverage. But in "Central America in Revolt," in a segment also shown on the evening news, the American public learned of the CIA's 1954 overthrow of "perhaps the only democratically-elected president in Guatemalan history."

Coverage of the guerrillas in Vietnam was virtually unheard of. It isn't particularly enlightening in Central American coverage. Guerrillas are rarely asked about their politics. The origin of their arms is the more common angle. But they are, at least, seen and heard. And "Central America in Revolt" went a step further, including interviews with Guatemalan guerrillas who described the evolution of their movement from political to military struggle.

During Vietnam, the news was dominated almost entirely by American officialdom. *Continued on page 14*

Writing off third world issues

By David Spurr

IN INDICTING THE U.S. AND other Western nations for "media imperialism," third world critics have pointed to the disproportionate emphasis on violence, conflict and bizarre behavior in news coverage of less developed countries. But this critique may be less revealing than an analysis of style, which shows that the major U.S. media often dismiss the third world point of view through the language they employ.

The crisis in the southwest African territory of Namibia, whose black inhabitants are struggling for political independence from the Union of South Africa, offers a case in point.

The *New York Times'* Flora Lewis refers to this as "the festering Namibian issue." For the *Times'* Joseph Lelyveld it is "the Namibian briar patch," while *U.S. News and World Report* sense incipient Marxism in this "bleak outpost of East-West rivalry." Through the metaphorical content of these phrases, Namibia enters a popular, deeply-rooted American mythology that associates third world and especially African countries

with images of disease, madness, death and the hostile forces of nature. Hence the description of an Angolan village during the current hostilities by the *Washington Post's* Richard Harwood: "It sits on a barren, dusty plain, surrounded by nothingness. I could imagine becoming very violent and depraved after a few years under this broiling sun."

American reporters also appear unable to identify with human forces in the third world. Lewis, for example, depicts a situation in which reasonable, clear-thinking American diplomats are forced to deal with childish and irrational black Africans.

Describing the work of the State Department's Chester A. Crocker, Lewis writes, "He pointed out correctly, if annoyingly to Africans, that Washington can't just push a button and deliver an independent, majority-ruled Namibia." She then cites "senior Western diplomats who have followed African quarrels for years" in order to observe: "The black nations are becoming increasingly aware of their need to concentrate on their own problems."

Lewis' style coincides with that of correspondent Gregory Jaynes who, on returning from an African "tour of duty," reflects wearily in the *Times*: "These nations are so very young, and many are so

very foolish, as only the young can be."

Or one can cite a *Time* magazine essay, which takes the global view: "In the long run it is in the interests of the West and its wealthy friends in the third world to wean the poorer nations from their current paradoxical addiction: socialist nostrums at home financed by capitalist largesse from abroad." In this language the West is not only wealthy; it is also healthier and wiser than the poorer nations which, like Jaynes' foolish young, must be weaned from their innocent but fallen condition.

Perhaps most damaging to American understanding of the current crisis, however, is the almost total absence of the black Namibian voice in U.S. news reporting on that country. Out of nine articles on Namibia appearing in *Time* and *Newsweek* in the past 14 months, only two are based on a visit to the country itself. Instead, most of the articles focus on debate over the future of Namibia in Washington, Geneva, the United Nations and Pretoria. While such negotiations certainly deserve coverage, the overall effect is to portray black Africa as seen through white eyes—be they American, European or South African.

Even when American newsmen take the trouble to visit black Africa, they

seem incapable of talking to ordinary people about what is happening to their country. Last March, for example, *Time* sent two correspondents into Namibia along with South African troops attempting to put down revolutionary activities of the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO). While neutral in tone, the *Time* report relies exclusively on South African commanders for assessment of the conflict, and shows the most concern for their tactical difficulties—as in the observation that "it is exceedingly difficult for South African troops to distinguish enemy guerrillas from the local populace."

It is this same "enemy," of course, that the UN recognizes as "the authentic representative of the Namibian people."

In the face of systematically superficial and condescending news media, American readers and broadcast listeners are left with questions that don't occur often enough to their foreign correspondents: What do the people of Namibia say about what is happening to their country? How do they view their American and European employers in the uranium, copper and diamond mines? What conditions must prevail for Namibia to survive as an independent state?

In order for the American news media to become truly informative, journalists must seek a new press freedom—not from government control, but from the narrow avenues of their own minds. ■

David Spurr teaches English at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle.

KATE ELLIS

What do we mean in saying family?

By Kate Ellis

WHEN I OPEN UP A copy of *In These Times* these days, I find myself humming the title song from *Alfie*: "What's it all about...?" I am referring, of course, to the debate between Michael Lerner and me, and co-starring John Judis, Jim Rinnert, Greg Calvert, Ray Olsen, the *ITT* 21 and all those who have joined in via the letters column. Everyone on this list is for increased social spending to benefit children and those who care for them. So what's keeping us apart?

What it's all about, I think, is language—our most important political tool. After all, the impetus behind the debate is a sense of outrage that Jesse Helms and his gang would dare to call themselves "pro-family." When they use the word "family" they mean Father Knows Best. And what father knows best is that gays, blacks, uppity women, spineless liberals and kids who have been taught about sex in school are undermining his authority.

It would be nice if we had a single definition of the family to counterpose to this. Instead, I suggest that we have two, and the debate is over whose should be used in our campaign against the right. One that I call the "maximalist definition" is advanced by Michael Lerner, who changed the name of his organization from Friends of the Family to Friends of Families better to reflect his position.

Lerner defines the family as "the place where human love and intimacy can be treated as the highest value." He acknowledges that it is not always such a place, but affirms his belief that "love is possible." People are loving by nature, and if the capitalist work world did not frustrate them and tire them out, they would maintain long-term relationships.

Lerner therefore calls on the left to adopt a pro-family program in the form of a Family Bill of Rights demanding child care, paid maternity and paternity leaves, safety and health committees at worksites, a 35-hour work week and tax breaks for "any parent participating in a neighborhood or workplace parent support group that meets at least once a month for 10 months in the year to discuss the common problems faced by parents and families, or for any parent completing a course in family relations, child development or communication skills."

Aside from this last idea (which reminds a Mormon friend of mine of nothing more than the thoroughly patriarchal church she

left behind), there is nothing here that the left does not support. What Lerner's critics object to is the way he proposes to package and sell his program to those Americans who are turned off by the left because of its association with sexual permissiveness in general and with the gay and women's movements in particular.

The centerpiece of this package is an American Families Day complete with "family games, activities for children, singalongs, community dancing (with special sensitivity to making the dancing possible for family members of all ages), picnics and the creation of Family Rituals, as the community collectively acknowledges that building families is a hard task, that the people who are attempting to do so need much support and that support will come in large part from each other as we attempt to build a public awareness that family life needs and deserves support."

The wrapping on this package is something called "the community." But this word, too, can mean several things. Lerner seems to think of it as the family writ large, a place for love and intimacy—a warm environment in which to talk about family problems. What makes me a minimalist on the issue of the family is that, for me, this vision of individuals embedded in womb-like communities leaves out too much of the human spirit to make it either a truthful image or a realistic goal. As with "the family," a lot of things done in the name of "the community"—defined in purely moral, noneconomic terms—are repressive and even cruel.

A minimalist definition of the family begins with the premise that language is a system of conventions through which people learn how their culture puts the world together and what it expects of them. It is not a rigid system: words acquire new meanings as these expectations and models of the world adapt to more refined observation and to cultural changes propelled by technology. Nevertheless, we shy away from the idea, expressed by Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty, that a word means what we choose it to mean.

Perhaps we would like there to be an institution whose sole reason for being lay in giving love and support regardless of a person's disposition, behavior or achievements. The family performs this task imperfectly not because its adult members work long hours for low pay, but because human beings are limited and the family performs an important additional function that the maximalists leave out. As an institution with a public as well as a private face, it socializes its members so that they can function effectively within their culture.

To locate the source of all domestic unhappiness in the world of work, as Lerner does, exaggerates a partial truth. But it also exacerbates a split between that world and the private world of love and intimacy by emphasizing the disjunction between the noncompetitive ethos of the family and the competitive ethos of capitalist work. Feminists know that competitiveness between women is learned at home. But they also object to a privatized definition of family because the public/private split on which it rests has always been used to subordinate women.

Lerner's aim is to claim the family as our institution, in contrast to the way feminism has often defined it as *their* institution. The right's definition of the family has not only a good deal of history but reality on its side. Love and intimacy work against social control, but they are also its subject and its agents.

Consider the parental notification provisions of the right's "profamily" legislation. Why should the left oppose these if,

as Judis says in support of Lerner, the family provided "a home and security for its members" and "a protected space for love and sex," neither more nor less? Access to intimacy, backed up by the threat of loss of love, is part of the parental tool chest, though the use of those tools may vary widely. Parents make rules, but they also follow them.

One thing that makes the white nuclear family so problematic now is that its members expect more of it than past generations did. What was once an organic economic unit (often described through metaphors of the body, with father as head, mother as heart, etc.) has now become an aggregate of related individuals, each with rights that may be in conflict. Consequently, the interests of women, children and other dependents—once assumed to be identical with those of the father—are now demanding and receiving support from "the family."

The history of the nuclear family is a history of the partly successful struggle of these subordinate groups, particularly in

have, in outline, the only program that will achieve that end. Public control of the economy will require the creation of decision-making bodies that can fill the void between powerful bureaucracies and the isolated family.

I've been reading the responses of workers in Elizabeth, N.J., to the closing of the Singer plant after 109 years. There were company-sponsored dances and ball games and a sense of continuity between generations of Elizabeth residents who worked at the plant—all jettisoned now as Singer shows the other side of its paternalism. Lerner proposes to create a community out of family support groups and safety committees on the job. But these will be exercises in futility if their aim is to support the family rather than to control companies like Singer, whose recreation halls have undoubtedly generated family rituals as they integrated social (private) life with the economic (public) life of their host communities. The residents of Elizabeth need economic democracy, not courses in how to talk to your lover or



the area of sexual validation. Fallen women are no longer regularly driven from the door, the names of gay children are sometimes uttered at family gatherings and masturbators are not usually beaten. Now the right thinks the family is giving out this validation too promiscuously.

The escalation in expectations put upon the family goes hand in hand with its increasing isolation, its relegation to the private sphere. The right opposes this. It wants to give the family as a family (read: the father as a father) a role in public policymaking and blames the beneficiaries of the family's increased sexual permissiveness for the decline in its public power. To counter this, the left needs to decide who should be making the decisions (over school curriculum, for instance) that the right wants to give back to parents.

The impossibility of coming up with a simple left position on parental input into education should alert us to the complexity of the issues being raised by the right. Visions of a magically invoked "community" collectively deciding to support the family by having everyone dance to the same tunes only mask the depth of the problem. The right is addressing the public perception of an impersonal, bureaucratic apparatus invisibly controlling people's lives. At the other end of the spectrum of power is the family—the only institution that confers on its members a sense of identity, continuity and control.

We share with those to whom the right is speaking not their perception of the family but their perception of its context. And though we have not yet talked very much about changing that context, we

teenage children.

If economic and political decision-making can be "brought back home" through public control of the workplace, if unions and geographic communities can gain power over their resources and elected officials and if those officials can have leverage over corporations—as the mayor of Elizabeth did not have over Singer—then people will not see the family as the only social institution that fosters love, support, respect and cooperation. Socialists have refused to confine those qualities to the home and we should deepen that tradition, not abandon it.

If Judis is referring to tax dollars for, among other things, education, child care and AFDC when he speaks of the special responsibility that society bears toward the child bearing family, we don't need him to tell us that childless people will not receive these benefits. To speak to the concerns the right is addressing we need more than a defense of the welfare state. What the left brings to the discussion of the family is an insistence on looking at the underlying causes of the crisis in personal life.

High on the list of these is the erosion of the economic base of community life. How the quality of personal life (in families and out of them) would be affected by a democratized economy cannot be fully predicted. But socialists have a vision of the human use of human capabilities. Applying that vision to places like Elizabeth is much more difficult than pursuing a fantasy of unconditional love. We need to focus, in other words, not on improving our havens, but rather on making the world less heartless.

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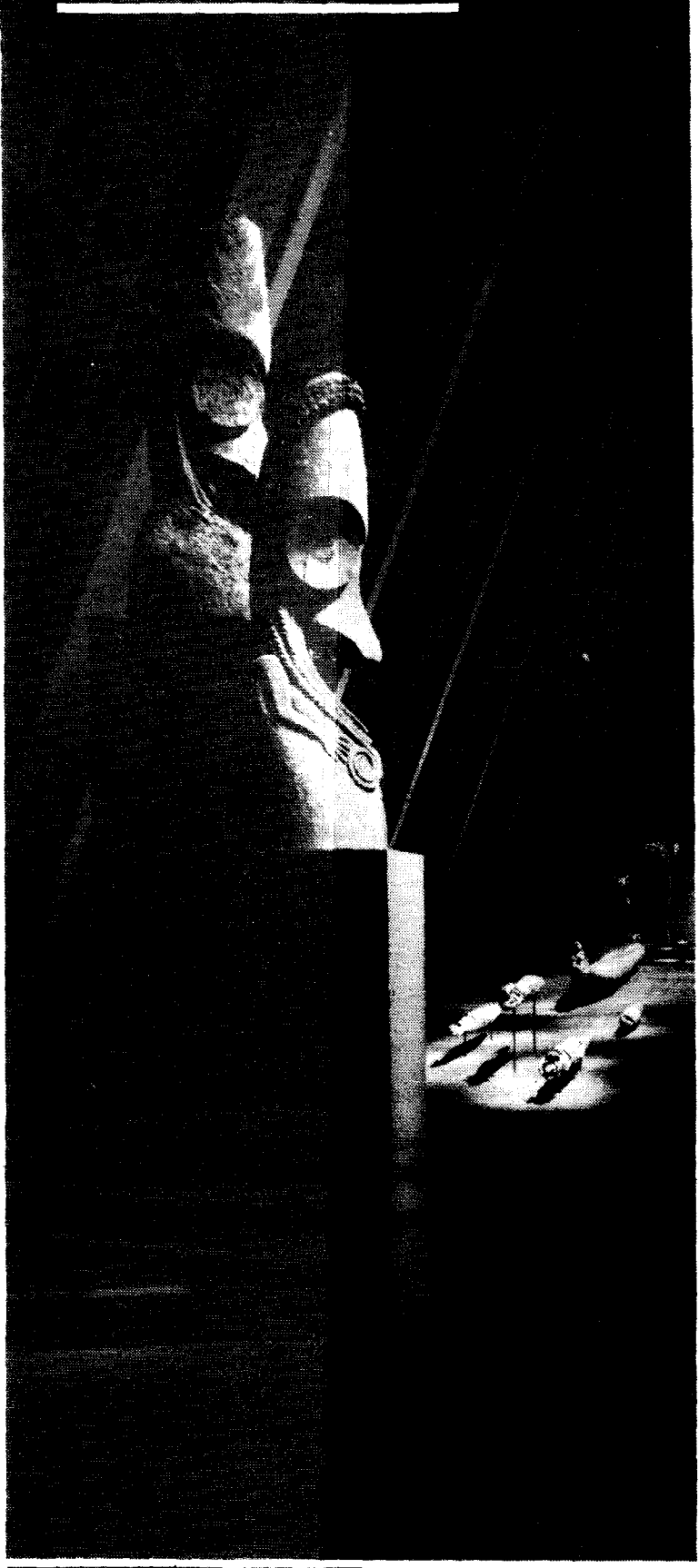
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ART & ENTERTAINMENT



MUSEUMS

Cannibalizing primitive art

By Daniel Newman

The recently opened Rockefeller wing of primitive art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is actually a memorial chapel, honoring the taste of Nelson and the sacrifice of his son who died mysteriously in New Guinea. In it "primitive" works are arranged as a dazzling show of masterpieces. Standing in a seductively lit, high-tech environment, these masterworks, trophies of imperialism, are installed as objects of timeless, formal beauty, through which the museum-going public is made blind to the men and women who labored to make these masks, costumes, instruments and fetishes. Blinded, too, to the cultures in which these objects had meaning.

It does not take more than a few minutes of walking through the darkness where there is no

place to stop, lean or sit to become profoundly depressed. This is a show that masquerades as its opposite—as the *preservation* of the arts of disappearing people. But timeless preservation may be the outer form of theft and burial.

The Rockefellers and the Metropolitan have hired Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates to design the new wing. The Oceanic Hall was designed to balance the housing for the Temple of Dendur at the northern end of the Museum. It shares with it the slanted multi-pane glass wall and ceiling, the ambient light and the use of high empty space (the hall is 50 feet high) to sanctify the objects within it. In their Ford Foundation building, a calculated wilderness park is surrounded by tiers of glass-fronted offices; Roche, Dinkeloo and Associates turned inside out the American theme

of the machine in the garden. Just as nature was incorporated in the large Ford design, now primitive art is incorporated in the Rockefeller wing.

A spacious labyrinth contains the African and American objects. In the African area the ceilings are low. Natural light cannot reach there; it is darkest Africa. The objects are packaged in wells of light, or within plexiglass cubes or behind thin panes of glass.

The Pacific Island area has a more modern and impressive theatrical packaging. Monumental objects are housed in a cool, engineered space perhaps best typified by the color-field grey-blue panel that backs up the Asmat figures. Both theatrics work equally to encase the objects in abstract color and light, just as Lee Boltin's photos do in *Masterpieces of Primitive Art*, the Nelson A. Rockefeller Collection, a book published in 1979 and sold then for \$30, now given to us for \$9.95 as a catalogue replacement. (I suppose we are meant to feel grateful for this bargain, just as Nelson meant us to be grateful for his scheme to sell reproductions of his universal art collection a few years ago.)

The Metropolitan's skilled conservationists have repainted and refeathered these objects, filling in the cracks of time and use. Certainly, the light and color settings also serve to remove most of the traces of the tool's marks, the dancer's sweat and the weathering and natural decay of these objects. They exist in the eternal present.

Splendid isolation.

Information is kept to a minimum. For example, the only section that carries a specific culture's name is the Asmat exhibit, singled out undoubtedly as the place where Michael Rockefeller disappeared and thus the collection's sanctum sanctorum. General labels primarily give geographic information. Maps are featured as in any good tourist guide. Labels for objects name tribe, material and donor. But there is no more than a perfunctory nod in the direction of the objects having had an existence in daily use or ceremony. Captions state "Ceremonial Mask." What ceremony? we might ask.

"Aren't we lucky that Nelson was very rich so that they could bring back these things for us to see?" one museum visitor said. We are meant to feel privileged and overwhelmed, awed by the rich pricelessness of things and by their sheer quantity. Fifteen hundred objects are shown. There is always more to see just around the corner, as befits an encyclopedia survey. I wonder how many share my experience of being overloaded and tired 10 minutes after I began, thus making me hurry (and not noticing what was lacking) past the vast accumulation—feeling not only helpless in the dark, but also glutted with things and empty of experience.

The modern imperial patron takes these things into the best of all possible worlds, the art museum, where his power is enshrined as good taste. Encased as rare, formal items, they are seen in splendid isolation. We are asked to forget all that we know about imperialism. "To discover the various uses of things is the work of history," said Karl Marx. The museum that stands outside of history becomes the burial ground of history.

Daniel Newman is an artist who currently chairs the visual arts department at Rutgers University.

THEATER

All the drama of true stories



A small mixed-race cast (here, left to right, Janet Langon, Bruce Butler, Joan Rosenfels) plays many parts.

By Mary Panzer

Political theater can assume the difficult task of educating audiences by appealing both to reason and emotions. A fine instance of such ambitious theater is *Hibakusha: Stories from Hiroshima*, the latest play by the Modern Times Theater, a five-year-old ensemble company based in New York. Its timely subject: the aftereffects of nuclear war.

Set in Hiroshima, spanning the years 1948 to 1968, the play takes its title from the Japanese word for "victims of the bomb," whose disabilities caused them to be ostracized and abandoned during the years that followed. Drawing from meticulous research into journalistic, scholarly and illustrated accounts of the bombing, *Hibakusha* assembles a wide, vivid cast of characters. Old and young, beggars and businessmen, mothers, teachers, industrialists and activists are united to tell the story of one couple. Hiroshi Okamoto, a selfless relief worker, and Kiku Maetani, a young crippled woman, meet in English class and only join forces when they both, independently, grow more militant in their work for other Hibakusha.

Gradually, deeper and more frightening effects of their outcast status emerge, as felt by a mother who gave birth to her son three months after the bomb, by a child raised by other children in the city's black market and by Hiroshi himself, who cares for humanity more than he cares for any one woman or man. Physical ills mirror harsh inner scars.

Hiroshima/Nagasaki (Basic Books) and *Unforgettable Fire*

Hiroshima victims are omnipresent living proof and warning of nuclear war.

(Pantheon) were both published in 1981 as part of a series of activities commemorating the 35th anniversary of the dropping of the bomb. But remembering history seems to have no effect on our leaders' nuclear policy. *Hibakusha* makes use of the strength of the stage to make the situation concrete.

The play and production still falls short of its ambitious goals. Act I sets the scene and works hard to establish the issues at hand. Citizens of 1948 Hiroshima have much less knowledge—though vastly more experience—than 1982 audiences. In Act II when the friendship between Hiroshi and Kiku flowers, we become engaged with the characters, and *Hibakusha* reveals its fresh, incisive power. The familiar settings where the characters meet—a school room, a market, a public park—provide an acutely strong sense of place, and the scenes show how slender is the line which separates the lives in the play from our own.

For Kiku and Hiroshi—the people they work for—Hibakusha are omnipresent evidence of nuclear war. For us, they become a lesson in history, and an affecting vision of our future—the intimate future of families, children and lovers that is rarely subject to speculation under the shadow of the arms race. The small cast of mixed races (Joan Rosenfels and Glen Kubota with Bruce Butler, Steve Friedman, Janet Langon and Mary Lum playing 28 parts among them) emphasizes the play's universal message. Steve Friedman's script displays the company's diverse talents and director Denny Partridge's short, smartly-paced scenes and lighting costume changes create the illusion of a bustling metropolis.

Hibakusha, playing at Saint Peter's Church in New York until March 28, will tour nationwide during the spring and fall of 1982. It will tour in ensemble with *Bread and Roses*, a musical play based on the Lawrenceville, Mass., strike of 1911 written and produced by Modern Times last year.

Mary Panzer is a historian of popular culture who lives in New York City.

Amtrak Media

Continued from page 9

1972, Democratic primary adversaries George McGovern and Hubert Humphrey incorporated a roadbed nationalization option into their platforms. But today, according to NARP's Ross Capon, "the issue is deadlier than it was even five years ago."

With government takeover no longer seen as a realistic threat, many railroad leaders recognize the contradictions inherent in the current set-up. "There's a tremendous inefficiency with everybody running segments of the operation," says former Amtrak president Paul Reistrup. "Conrail is all freight, Amtrak all intercity passenger, and you've got each of these commuter authorities. Everybody's got their own shops, their own procedures, their own everything. With one railroad there would be tremendous efficiencies." Reistrup's conclusion? "It's an unsolvable problem."

But he does see one way out. "All you've got to do is commit the DOT and Congress to pass a five-year funding law and fund it," he says.

But pessimism about the possibility of such a government turnaround underlies all of the current passenger train proposals. Although no rail passenger system in the world today prospers without government planning and support, Amtrak officials and critics alike have reluctantly written off hopes of disrupting the highway lobby's dominance over U.S. transportation policy. Congressional refusal to chart a balanced transportation plan leaves the future of American passenger trains dangling on quixotic strategies that would free Amtrak from the stranglehold of federal dependency.

Joel Parker and Dan Biggs are former chairmen of a Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks local in the San Francisco area.

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Continued from page 11

cials. Even when it was critical, the critical voices were usually those of dissident officials, concerned about tactics. The question was always, "Are we winning?" Not, "Do we have a right to be there?" And again, one important reason El Salvador coverage has been as critical as it has is that the American political establishment is deeply divided over Central America policy.

But in "Central America in Revolt," we see something new: lengthy interviews with Mexican President Lopez-Portillo and statesman Carlos Fuentes, who offer a distinct perspective on world politics.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for two insertions and \$10.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 40 words or less (additional words are 35¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of Paul Ginger.

NEW YORK, N.Y.

April 17

"Protest and Survive: Poland, El Salvador and Disarmament." An all-day conference featuring Dan Smith, Chairperson of the Committee for European Nuclear Disarmament (END), Daniel Singer, author of *The Road to Gdansk* and Robert Armstrong of NACLA and co-author of *El Salvador: The Face of Revolution*. Morning session begins 10:00 a.m. Afternoon workshops with panelists Paul Robeson, Jr., Stanley Aronowitz, Marta Petrusiewicz, Maryknoll Sister, Darlene Cuccinello, Craig Livingston and Janet Sherk from 1-5 p.m. Riverside Church, 120th & Riverside Drive. \$4.00. Evening party. For advance tickets or to contribute, contact Solidarity Support Campaign, 301 W. 150th St., NYC 10025. (212) 222-9703.

April 18

Celebrate 45th anniversary Veterans Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Sunday, April 18, 12 noon, Statler Hotel, NYC. Hear Cong. Ted Weiss, civil liberties attorney Leonard Boudin, call for support of democracy in Spain, no return to McCarthyism, no intervention in El Salvador. Dinner, admission, entertainment, \$25. Tickets from VALB, 799 Bway, NYC, 10003. Or call OR 4-5552, 11 AM-6 PM.

April 22-24

First Radical Humor Festival, Thursday 8 p.m.-Saturday 6 p.m. (Sponsored by NYU Center for Marxist Studies and Cultural Correspondence Magazine). Performances—Friday, 8 p.m.; Washington Irving H.S. at 40 Irving Pl. (\$6/\$4 for students and unemployed; \$1 less in advance) Panels, Workshops, Film, Video, Free Performance Space, and Art Exhibit on humor and social change at NYU (registration at Tisch Bldg., 40 W. 4th St.) (\$5/\$3 for students and unemployed; \$1 less in advance) Left comics and cartoonists, satirists, singers, players, artists, poets, activists, and philosophers from all over the country are coming. Join us. For information, call (212) 787-1784.

June 21-July 2

Conference: "The Crisis in Hegemony: Reconstructing a Left Public." Sponsors: Social Text, New Political Science, Marxist Literary Group. Ses-

"I always respect the principle of self-determination," says Lopez-Portillo. "If a people want to set up a certain type of government for themselves, they have the right to do so." "If they can win that right," adds Bill Moyers. And Lopez Portillo concludes, "If they can win that right, and if they are allowed to win that right."

The media, of course, are no substitute for a serious political opposition with an alternative vision for U.S. foreign policy. And it's hard to predict how long the current mood of aggressiveness and independence will last. News organizations have never enjoyed being a focus of political controversy.

Even the most critical coverage from the major news media isn't likely to lead to active public involvement in changing the direction of U.S. foreign policy. Consider Bill Moyer's conclusion to "Central America in Revolt." Whatever the Wall

Street Journal may believe about "romanticizing revolution" there weren't any heroes in TV's most provocative account of the current crisis. The revolutionaries, in Nicaragua where they were successful, were presented as seekers of power, threatening democracy and moderation. The activists of the Church, as well-meaning but naive. The opposition and the administration at home, as equally simplistic.

Wisdom, it seems, could only be possessed by those who stood on the sidelines, "who don't have an ideology to promote or a policy to defend." But without ideologies and policies worth promoting, it's hard to see how the country will ever get out of the cycle of one more "Vietnam" after another.

Dan Hallen, who teaches political science and communications at the University of California, San Diego, is writing a book on Vietnam press coverage.

sions/room/board, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. Info/registration, c/o Doris Sommer, Amherst College, Amherst 01002; (413) 542-2396.

BROOKLYN, N.Y.

April 26

NY Democratic Socialists of America (formerly DSOC/NAM) will present Robert Lekachman with the "Humanomics" Award at the First City Theatre, 76 East 13th St. (near 4th Ave.). Speakers include Ruth Messinger, Murray Kempton, Irving Howe, Michael Harrington, and Mark Green. Entertainment by Tom Chapin and the Labor Theatre. Admission: \$25 to DSA members, \$30 to friends. Time: 7-10 p.m. Monday. For further information call (212) 791-6305 or (212) 662-6977.

PHILADELPHIA, PA

April 19 & 20

Steve Nelson, American radical, to speak on "The Left's Contribution to the Labor Movement" at DSA Public Forum on April 19, Houston Hall, Univ. of Penn., 3417 Spruce St., 8:00 p.m.; and on April 20 at Maplewood Book Company, 45 Maplewood Mall, Germantown, 8:00 p.m.

CHICAGO, IL

April 24

An evening with the real Solidarity. Oppose martial law in Poland and U.S. intervention in El Salvador. What were Solidarity's aims? What will be its future? Trade unionists, writers: Daniel Singer, author of *The Road to Gdansk* and a leading authority on Poland; Robin Serner, Chicago Religious Task Force on El Salvador, recently returned from Nicaragua; Paul Robeson Jr., Kurt Vonnegut; Ed Sadowski; Gary Fields, attended Solidarity Congress; Urszula Wislanka on the role of women in Solidarity; Bronislaw Mistal, Solidarity member; Ralph Schoenman, American Workers and Artists for Solidarity. Tickets \$3.50. 7:00 p.m. at Holy Trinity High School Auditorium, 1443 West Division St., parking available. Sponsored by American Workers and Artists for Solidarity with Solidarnosc. For more information, call Gary Fields (312) 384-7464 or Lisa DiCaprio (312) 227-2229.

April 29-May 1

"Jobs in the '80s: Problems, Priorities, Possibilities." A national conference of the practical how-to of job creation with a focus on the needs of neighborhoods. Workshops include: Organizing the unemployed, union takeovers of plants, small business and job creation, work alternatives and coops, use of pension plans, etc. Conference site

and registration information, contact National Training and Information Center, 1123 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago 60607, (312) 243-3035.

May 1

The Democratic Socialists of America Chicago local will hold its annual Debs-Thomas dinner on Saturday, May 1, at the McCormick Inn. This year's honoree is long-time DSOC and UAW activist Carl Shier. The cost of the dinner is \$25 and reservations and payments should be made in advance. Individuals or groups may be listed in the ad book as patrons for an additional \$25. Please send checks payable to the Debs-Thomas Dinner Committee, 201 N. Wells, Suite 1216, Chicago, IL 60606. All proceeds from the dinner will be used to fund DSA work in Chicago in the coming year.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 21

An evening in solidarity with Solidarity. Trade unionists, writers and artists speak out in opposition to martial law in Poland. Speakers include: Daniel Singer, Paul Robeson Jr., Ralph Schoenman, Cam Duncan, Jane Cave, of the Poland Watch Committee, Dave Skocik of PATCO, and Josh Williams of the AFL-CIO Washington DC. At 7:30 at the Church of St. Stephens, 16th and Newton Streets. Sponsored by American Workers and Artists for Solidarity with Solidarnosc. For more information, call: Mike Urquhart at (202) 523-1371 (days) or (301) 733-4937 (evenings).

TORONTO, ON

April 22

An evening in solidarity with Solidarity. Join trade unionists, writers and artists in opposition to martial law in Poland. Speakers include: Daniel Singer, Ralph Schoenman, Wally Majeski, President of the Metropolitan Toronto Labor Council, Dave Patterson, Director of District 9 of the United Steel Workers, Zygmunt Przetakiewicz, Chief of Solidarity Information Bureau of Canada, Erica Ritter and Rick Salutin. At the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, at 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by the local Solidarity Support Committee. For more information, Call: Dick Roman at (416) 978-6930 (days) or (416) 535-1341 (evenings).

BERKSHIRES

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Taxes

Continued from page 16

whether or not he or she wanted to support the military."

Another project he supports is the

Conscience and Military Tax Campaign, coordinated by four activists in Bellport, N.Y. Signers of the resolution they circulate pledge to withhold at least the military portion of their income taxes when notified that 100,000 people have signed the resolution. CMTC also administers an escrow account to hold refused taxes.

Yet Eccleston urges people not to wait for the safety of numbers. The important thing to him is taking personal responsibility and going on record against preparations for nuclear war.

Eccleston is accordingly less enthusiastic about the strategy of some war tax resisters to avoid contributing to the mil-

itary by reducing their income to a non-taxable level. "The point is not to be self-sacrificing, but to witness for peace. The real issue is peace, not tax resistance." ■ *Marcia Yudkin's writing has been published in the New York Times, Ms., and the Northeast alternative weekly, The Valley Advocate.*

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THE INTERIM STEERING committee of the National Writers Union organizing project is looking for a New York-based temporary full-time staff person this spring and summer. It may become a permanent position. Applicants should have both literary and administrative experience. If some of this was gained on the left, so much the better. Send C.V. to OCNWU, Ste. 239, 207 E. 85 Street, New York City 10028, attn: Marv Gittleman.

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**By Marcia
Yudkin**

"Some people think tax resistance is an extreme thing to do," muses Steven Broll, "but you have to be as extreme and active as the people you're opposing. Money talks." An increasing number of people are using April 15th as an opportunity to talk back. According to a recent General Accounting Office report, tax resistance rose sharply in tax years 1979 and 1980, with a 400 percent increase in the Northeast. Accurate estimates of the number of war tax resisters are difficult to arrive at. The IRS has a category called "illegal protesters," in which it placed 6,694 individuals in 1978 and 15,285 in 1980. According to the War Resisters League, those figures are a gross underestimate. There might be as many as 200,000 people resisting taxes from any principled position, including at least several thousand specifically protesting military spending. IRS figures would also not include individuals using wholly legal means to resist war taxes. And both the War Resisters League and the Conscience and Military Tax Campaign report a groundswell of interest since President Reagan took office.

Steven Broll, who stocks shelves in a store in Amherst, Mass., last year found himself for the first time owing the government money at tax time. He happened to hear an announcement on the radio of a number to call about war tax resistance, and after a conference with veteran tax resisters Wally and Juanita Nelsen of nearby Deerfield, he decided not to pay the \$255 he owed. He filed and enclosed a statement of his decision of conscience instead of a check.

Broll might seem an unlikely recruit to the ranks of tax resisters. Both his parents were officers in the military, and only a long string of coincidences prevented his own enlistment in the Air Force. Recently, however, he has developed what he calls "pacifist leanings."

"I was raised a Roman Catholic," he explains, "and we weren't exactly encouraged to read the Bible for ourselves. But when I began to read the Bible I found that it's pretty much black and white in the Gospels not to kill and to love

your enemy. From believing that it's wrong to kill under any circumstances, the next logical step is that I shouldn't participate in killing in any way. Working so that my taxes go toward killing is intolerable."

He has also come to feel strongly about El Salvador. "A lot of people say they're against U.S. aid going to El Salvador, but they don't make the connection that money is taken out of their paycheck every week and sent to El Salvador."

Comparative risk.

Breaking the law was not an easy thing for Broll to bring himself to do. Last year, a series of "Dear Taxpayer" letters ended with threats to garnish his wages or seize bank accounts, although neither happened. This year, his giving false information on his W-4 withholding form and deciding not to file a tax return at all make him liable to a year's imprisonment and a substantial fine. Although he points out that Wally and Juanita Nelsen have been resisting for 30 years and Juanita was only jailed once for an hour, he knows that the government could create difficulties for him.

Erin Freed of the Pioneer Valley War Tax Resisters points out that it usually costs the government more money to pursue tax resisters than it will collect, a good reason not to bother. On the other hand, the tax system relies on voluntary compliance, and the IRS must crack down on "avoidance schemes" that appear to be popular. Hence there is great variance in the government's response to war tax resisters. One PVWTR member had the \$600 in his checking account seized without notice during his second year of war tax resistance, while another member received his first phone call from the IRS nine years after he began to resist. Since court trials of war tax resisters are expensive and may generate publicity favorable to the cause, they are few and far between. From 1948 to 1971 seven

pacifist refusers were criminally prosecuted, from 1972 to 1978 none, and in 1979 there were two criminal convictions.

"In our little world," Broll says, "if my wife and I lost our savings or if I lost my job, that would really put a dent in our lives, but if you put yourself in a village of El Salvador where they can take you out and shoot you—or put yourself in a European's place hearing about Haig's nuclear war and knowing that the war would be in your backyard—our risks are minimal."

The roughly \$2,000 that he owes the IRS has been contributed instead to an alternative fund administered by the Pioneer Valley War Tax Resisters, a local group of about a dozen longtime members. "We feel we can do a better job with our money than the government can," explains Broll. "We put the money toward life-affirming purposes." Part of the money in the fund is reserved for legal fees a member might need, but most of it is loaned to local groups who don't have access to mainstream funding.

Like many tax resisters, Broll keeps no bank accounts. Instead he gives extra money to friends on interest-free loans. "You can't have a house or a car in your name because the IRS could seize it," he says, "and it's much easier to keep the money away from the government in the first place if you can be self-employed."

Alan Eccleston, an architect and builder

**Some people
use income
tax time
to send an
anti-military
message to the
government.**

who also lives in Amherst, is a war tax resister in the ideal position of being able to withhold the quarterly payments required of a self-employed person. But he has a very different philosophy of resistance. He makes partial quarterly payments and doesn't much mind that for the last seven years, the IRS has usually ended up with his full income tax assessment, plus interest and penalties on the amount held back. "Some war tax resisters put a maximum of energy into preventing collection by the IRS," he says. "I put my energy into following my conscience and conveying my beliefs to others." A Quaker, Eccleston opposes war in any form. "The only people who have the opportunity to be conscientious objectors against war in this country are 17-year-old males," he points out, referring to draft registration. "But I believe that the First and Ninth Amendments to the Constitution protect my right to refuse war taxes."

So that people like himself can satisfy both their consciences and the law, he supports the passage of the World Peace Tax Fund bill, first introduced in the Senate in 1977 by Senator Mark Hatfield and now with 333 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives. The bill would provide taxpayers with the opportunity to identify themselves on their 1040 form as conscientious objectors to war taxes. The portion of their income tax that would otherwise go to the military would instead be deposited with the World Peace Tax Fund and be available only for peaceful purposes.

Eccleston rejects the criticism of some other war tax resisters that after 40 percent or so of their taxes was handed over to the World Peace Tax Fund, the same percentage of the remainder would still go to the military. "It's a good idea because the general fund would receive less money," he argues, "billions less if even 4 percent of the population chose to be COs. Their \$4 billion a year in the World Peace Tax Fund would clearly support alternatives to war that presently get no funding. It would spread the ethical decision to more people. Every year every taxpayer would have to think about

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